

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2018 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2019



BAYCOUNTY, FLORIDA



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COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



TOMMY HAMM
DISTRICT 1



ROBERT CARROLL
DISTRICT 2



WILLIAM T. DOZIER
DISTRICT 3



KEITH BAKER
DISTRICT 4



PHILIP "GRIFF" GRIFFITTS
DISTRICT 5

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSION

Hurricane Michael has been the most trying, difficult challenge ever faced by this community. In just a few short hours on Oct. 10, 2018, Bay County was indelibly marked by the Category 5 monster. But, in the time since, the people of this community have banded together to recover and rebuild in what can only be described as a triumph over tragedy. First responders, neighbors, and families all worked together tirelessly to bring some normalcy back into our lives. Bay County government's focus during Fiscal Year 2019 -- from Oct. 1, 2018 to Sept. 30, 2019 -- was centered on our recovery from the tremendous blow dealt by Hurricane Michael. This book aims to highlight those efforts and to outline the many accomplishments that were made over the course of the year. We hope to provide readers with a thorough understanding how their government works daily to better all of Bay County, particularly in the wake of disaster. As we continue to recover and rebuild, it is this board's responsibility to ensure to the best of our ability that we do so in a thoughtful, yet expedient, manner. The Bay County Board of County Commissioners is proud of the job our staff does every day to make our home a wonderful place to live and visit. We strive to ensure that our team is focused on being as customer and results oriented as possible while also being good stewards of taxpayers' dollars. Every member of this organization is committed to excellence and efficiency in government, and we are working every day to make sure that we are transparent and accountable to the citizens we serve. Our doors are always open to the public and we welcome input and feedback about how we can do and be better for the people of Bay County.

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ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners is a five-member governing board elected at-large to represent the citizens of Bay County. The board defines the role and guides the actions of the organization in ensuring the future of Bay County. The commission hires a county manager to implement policies established by the board and to manage the operations of the county. The commission annually adopts the millage rate and approves the budget, which determines the revenue and expenditures necessary to operate all county departments. The powers and duties of the county commission are established by Florida Statutes, Chapter 125.

The majority of offices of the Bay County Commission are located at the Bay County Government Center at 840 W. 11th St., Panama City. The campus also houses the offices of the Bay County Supervisor of Elections, the Tax Collector and the Property Appraiser.

THE 5 COUNTY DISTRICTS



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PDF format at the Bay County website:
www.baycountyfl.gov

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INTRO county manager



BOB MAJKA



MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER:

On Oct. 10, 2018, the landscape and future of Bay County was permanently altered with the midday arrival of Category 5 Hurricane Michael. In the days and hours leading up to the storm, Bay County Emergency Management and officials from agencies throughout the county, state, and federal government worked at an increasingly feverish pace to warn the community of the strengthening storm.

After the storm, aid from across the country rushed to Bay County from both the public and private sectors to help with response and recovery. Within 36 hours, the county's water treatment plant was operational and treating water for distribution, and within eight days the boil water notice was rescinded for wholesale distribution. Debris pickup began within two weeks of the storm and, upon completion, exceeded 17 million cubic yards, countywide. All Bay County roads were open, including private roads, by Oct. 18. In less than two weeks, power was restored to most of the county. And, in the weeks and months that followed, Bay County began to move closer and closer to some semblance of normalcy.

The Bay County Long-Term Recovery Task Force, comprised of representatives from each of the municipalities as well as the Bay County School Board, created a comprehensive recovery blueprint for the county for use by the state and federal government in recovery funding decisions. The plan is intended to bring transformative change, capitalizing on the opportunities brought forth by this tragedy.

On the one-year anniversary of the storm, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that the federal government, via the state of Florida, was sending what amounted to a 75-percent reimbursement of the over \$236 million spent by Bay County on hurricane expenses as of that date. Reimbursement of such a scale so soon after a disaster is unprecedented, and is directly related to the hard work by our staff to meticulously document costs and that of our county commissioners in collaborating with the state and federal government to quickly make our taxpayers whole.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the citizens of Bay County about the many ways in which we are working to reach our goals, established through our strategic planning process.

For the second year, we have included an employee spotlight in the pages of the annual report. Bay County employees strive daily to serve their friends and neighbors with dignity and integrity, and many of our staff faced the same challenges as many of our citizens, with loss of property and intense struggles following the storm. We salute all those in our community who have worked - and many who continue to do so - to recover fully.

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019 INCLUDE:

- Bay County's millage rate remained unchanged and among the lowest in the state at 4.43 mills, despite a loss in overall taxable value of 2.26 percent, attributed to Hurricane Michael.
- We recouped almost \$170 million from the federal and state government in reimbursement for expenses incurred from the storm, greatly reducing interest payments on \$250 million borrowed to cover up-front costs.
- We collected more than 10.2 million cubic yards of debris from county rights-of-way, waterways and canals.
- We initiated and managed the Private Property Debris Removal Program administered by the federal government, garnering approval of federal funding to clean/demolish more than 300 properties with damaged or destroyed homes and storm debris at no cost to the homeowners.
- The Long-Term Recovery Task Force, through extensive public input, completed a long-term recovery plan that will aid in directing federal dollars intended for recovery projects. The plan can be viewed at recoverbaycounty.com.
- Bay County commissioners traveled regularly to Tallahassee to lobby on behalf of our residents. We received more than \$9 million in direct aid from the Legislature during the 2019 session for various infrastructure and recovery projects, a figure far greater than we typically receive in a normal year. The state also approved a total of \$115 million aimed at improving the ongoing housing crisis in Bay County.
- We continued working toward the construction of a new Juvenile Justice Courthouse on the campus of the Bay County Courthouse and worked to remodel the new Federal Courthouse that will reopen on 11th Street in 2020.

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WHO WE ARE

The County Attorney represents the Board of County Commissioners in all legal matters. The three attorneys on staff represent Bay County in lawsuits, administrative hearings, and at public meetings. In addition, legal staff prepares and reviews ordinances, contracts, and other legal instruments. The attorneys also render legal opinions and provide legal support to commissioners, boards, and departments.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Faced with the threat of Hurricane Michael, county attorneys prepared a local declaration of a state of emergency. When approved by the commission or the chairman, this emergency declaration allows the county to implement extraordinary actions necessary to protect public health and safety. In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, the County Attorney's Office provided continuous legal support at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and prepared emergency orders restricting alcohol sales, instituting a curfew and burn ban, allowing wide-scale debris removal countywide, and relaxing county code provisions to permit temporary housing. In addition, legal staff worked on the following issues after Hurricane Michael:

- Emergency Purchases – Worked to ensure that critical emergency purchases met FEMA, state, and county purchasing code requirements.
- Arnold Interlocal Agreement – Prepared an interlocal agreement regarding the operation of Arnold High School as a shelter facility.
- Long-Term Recovery Task Force – Prepared the organizational documents for the formation of this task force.
- Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR) – Assisted in designing a PPDR program that allowed citizens to apply to FEMA for private property debris removal in order to remove safety hazards.
- Legislative Proposals – Drafted legislative proposals to assist the county and municipalities with the anticipated revenue shortfalls associated with Hurricane Michael.
- Loans and Grants – Assisted in applying for federal and state loans and grants to replace ad valorem tax losses and to finance local hurricane expenditures.
- SHIP/NSP Program – Drafted agreements to implement the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) and Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) that provide affordable housing programs in partnership with Panama City.

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DON BANKS

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



ANGELA WILLIAMSEN

Angela Williamsen is a legal assistant in the County Attorney's Office. She lives with her sister in a house in Callaway, and her parents live on the same property. Angela says the most stressful part of the storm was not being able to contact her brother, Bruce, who, as a hospital employee, was unable to evacuate.

A few days after the storm, Angela and her family returned to destroyed homes with collapsed ceilings, water damage, and mold -- they had lost everything, and Angela spent the next several months with family, then a condo, then a FEMA trailer while she continued to fight with her insurance company.

"The hurricane has taught me patience and to be less selfish. I know there are many people who suffered worse than I did after the storm. It also has made me realize the importance of the work we do at Bay County."

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



MARANDA GRIFFIN

As a United States Air Force spouse, Assistant Budget Officer Maranda Griffin evacuated under mandatory military orders on Tuesday Oct. 9, 2018. She left with seven other members of her family, leaving behind her brother, Ben Phillips, a Bay County Utilities employee who stayed to work. Following the storm, Maranda returned to work at the Bay County Emergency Operations Center while her husband remained out of town still under mandatory military evacuation orders for several more weeks. Her home suffered water damage that resulted in substantial mold growth, leaving it uninhabitable. Over the following months Maranda, her husband, daughter, and miniature schnauzer stayed in a camper and/or with family until their home repairs were completed on Sept. 11, 2019. Since Michael, Maranda and the other Budget Office staff have worked diligently to organize documentation for FEMA reimbursement and secure funding for the upfront cost of all Hurricane Michael expenses.



WHO WE ARE

The Budget Division creates, modifies, and monitors the annual budget for the Board of County Commissioners. We work closely with the county departments to develop the expenditure budget for the board. The office also develops financial projections for the county's revenues. It serves as a hub for financial data for the various departments under the board and assists the departments with any financial matters.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

- Bay County estimated Hurricane Michael damages and expenses to total more than \$661 million. Since the federal reimbursement process could take years, Bay County acquired \$250 million in bank loans.
- Additional funding programs attempted include:
 - Local Match Waiver with Governor's Office - By granting this waiver the State would fund up to the full amount needed for Bay County's FEMA match.
 - FEMA Reimbursement percentages changed from 75 percent FEMA / 25 percent state and local to 90 percent FEMA / 10 percent state and local. We received a change in percentages for FEMA Category A (debris removal) and Category B (emergency protective measures).
 - Expedited 50-percent reimbursement of expenses for the first 45 days in Categories A and B and received 50 percent of expected expenses in both categories.
 - Requested 100-percent reimbursement for post-disaster 46-90 days of Category A Debris Removal.
 - Community Disaster Loan (CDL) Program - The loan would be up to \$5 million with a possibility of loan forgiveness in the future.
 - Hurricane Michael State Recovery Grant Program - This grant has \$25 million available, however there is a \$10 million cap for each agency. Bay County has applied for the full \$10 million allowed. If granted, this money will be used to pay interest on loans acquired for Hurricane Michael expenses and to offset the county's portion of the FEMA match.
- Bay County's Hurricane Michael burn rate as of Sept. 27, 2019, including purchase orders and outstanding debris invoices:

	PAYMENTS	P.O.S AND REMAINING DEBRIS INVOICES
FEMA A - Debris Removal	\$145,239,250	\$29,764,125
FEMA B - Emergency Protective Measures	\$20,099,249	\$1,868,962
FEMA C - Roads & Bridges	\$194,749	\$133,195
FEMA D - Water Control Facilities	\$239,910	\$173,815
FEMA E - Buildings and Equipment	\$12,845,466	\$12,633,491
FEMA F - Utilities	\$686,946	\$165,650
FEMA G - Parks, Recreational & Other	\$78,873	\$1,996,370
FEMA Z - Admin Cost	\$5,867,863	\$205,922
TOTAL	\$185,252,305	\$46,941,529

The Budget Office follows a Florida law known as TRIM (Truth-in Millage) that is designed to inform the public about proposed taxes via notification by the property appraiser once millage rates are established by each taxing authority. Taxable value in Fiscal Year 2019 was more than \$16.4 billion, resulting in ad valorem collections of \$72.7 million.

The Budget Office is responsible for all Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) calculations for county payment to the various CRAs throughout the county. A CRA is an area deemed to be in a state of slum or blight, and once established, the CRA area tax base is frozen for 30 years, 40 years if extended. During the 30 years, the taxing authority may only receive tax revenue equal to the revenue collected in the base year. Revenue collected in excess of that amount is returned to the CRA to enable local governments to attract new business, make improvements, and rebuild underutilized areas. There are currently 11 CRAs within Bay County. Out of the \$72.7 million mentioned above, more than \$12 million was paid to CRAs in 2019.

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WHO WE ARE

Hurricane Michael presented significant challenges to the Communications Office, as providing critical public information before, during, and after this devastating event was of utmost importance. Thanks to relationships forged long before the storm struck, this one-person office grew significantly with assistance from communicators throughout Bay County, the state, and even as far as Washington state before, during, and after Hurricane Michael hit.

The Bay County Communications Office aims to enhance the community's access to Bay County government both directly through social media and the county's website and also via traditional media outlets. We are responsible for maintaining positive community and media relations through frequent contact and constant availability; preparation and distribution of informational publications; television and print news stories; and through the use of social media outlets. Governmental transparency and integrity is of the utmost importance, and the Communications Office strives to ensure openness and accountability to the media and public.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

- Collaborated with communicators from public and private agencies from Bay County and throughout the state of Florida and United States to coordinate response messaging for Hurricane Michael.
- Oversaw the issuance of hundreds of AlertBay notifications.
- In the weeks and months following the storm, issued daily press releases with updates and information.
- Fielded hundreds of media calls from throughout the world.
- Created videos, photographs, graphics and other social media content.
- Organized press conferences and media interviews with officials.
- Monitored local and national media messaging to ensure the dissemination of accurate information and gauge public sentiment about response efforts.
- Responded to many hundreds of records requests from media throughout the world.
- Coordinated 211 public information hotline.
- Conducted constant radio updates to the nonprofit radio station embedded at the Emergency Operations Center.
- Coordinated messaging about food and water points of distribution, DSNAP events, Community Resource Center.
- Worked with area communicators to create the Public Information Network, comprised of governmental and non-governmental communicators with the goal of ensuring accurate and timely information is provided to the public, particularly during emergency situations.
- Organized the 10th Annual Christmas Tree lighting, and procured and provided more than \$10,000 in gifts to hundreds of Bay County residents at the event.
- Developed, coordinated, edited, and oversaw the production of the 2018 Annual Report.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



SARAH BURRIS (LEFT)

SARAH BURRIS

Bay County Public Library Community Relations and Marketing Coordinator Sarah Burris took the Federal Emergency Management Administration's Basic Public Information Officer (PIO) training course two weeks before Hurricane Michael hit, just in case of a disaster. She never dreamed that the skills learned in that course would be put to the test so soon. Sarah evacuated from her home in the Cove area, but remained in Bay County when the storm hit, and was in a location that fared well compared to homes just down the street. Sarah reported to the PIO office in the Bay County Emergency Operations Center on Monday, Oct. 15, where she was tasked with gathering and verifying information for the daily press releases and other collateral issued by the office.

"This was extremely challenging when it was still hard to even use the burner phone I had picked up," she said. "Making calls and searching the internet didn't always work. Instead I became very familiar with working with everyone at the EOC. My reference librarian skills came in handy in making sure the food and community assistance sites were current."

Sarah and other local PIOs worked with communicators who came to assist from across the country, many of whom regularly travel to disaster areas as needed.

"We all worked as a team to compile the Facebook and social media posts, gather research, go to site visits, take photos and videos, and create press releases," Sarah said. "It has been a crazy, whirlwind of a year, but I learned so much."

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

builders services

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



TAMARA NISSEN

Senior Staff Assistant Tamara Nissen has been an employee with Builders Services for 13 years, starting as a receptionist and working her way up to permit technician and then senior staff assistant. Tamara worked through the building "boom" and the subsequent fall of the construction market in Bay County in the 2000s. Tamara is the go-to person for commercial, fire, and cell tower permits as well as being back-up for her supervisor when she is away. During Hurricane Michael, Tamara was the sole caretaker of two boys and her father. Without power at her home and driving through debris, she was at work fewer than five days after the storm hit on Oct. 10, 2018. She worked long hours under a tent and then went home to care for her own family's needs. Tamara goes above and beyond to help her coworkers and customers, even while struggling to get contractors to make repairs on her own home.



WHO WE ARE

The Builders Services Division is comprised of Florida-licensed building code officials and staff dedicated to assisting the public in meeting the requirements of the Florida Building Code along with related state laws and local ordinances intended to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Following Hurricane Michael, FY2019 was an especially challenging year for all of us.

Builders Services was at the forefront of helping Bay County and its citizens get back on their feet after the storm. A few days after the storm, Builders Services had staff out assessing damage and assisting citizens. A temporary office was set up under a tent next to the Bay County Library and began issuing hand-written permits for electrical repairs and inspections. In the months that followed, permit technicians, plans reviewers, and inspectors worked seven days a week for 12 or more hours each day to make sure that permits were issued, inspections were done, and power was restored. Temporary inspectors were "borrowed" from other counties to assist with the overwhelming number of roof and electrical inspections needed right after the storm. Temporary office help continued to work through the end of the year, helping with more than 1,000 calls received weekly. To make the permitting process easier, we began accepting faxed and emailed applications from approved contractors, which cut down on the number of daily walk-in customers. For many months right after the storm, we had more than 150 walk-in customers each day, and by the end of the year we averaged 50 to 75 walk-ins per day.

During FY19, we:

- Issued 25,915 permits
- Completed 40,985 inspections
- Registered 1,637 new contractors to work in Bay County

By Comparison, in FY18, we:

- Issued 8,743 permits
- Completed 16,000 inspections
- Registered 186 new contractors to work in Bay County

We have worked diligently with the state Department of Business and Professional Regulation and the Bay County Sheriff's Office to investigate and stop illegal contractors and unpermitted work. More than 150 new cases were opened since the storm with the majority involving unpermitted work. Some 251 new addresses have been issued since the storm, meaning new homes are coming to Bay County.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

We are pleased to currently have an Insurance Service Office (ISO), Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) score of 3 for Residential and 2 for Commercial. This scoring matrix is 1-10 with 1 being the top spot.



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WHO WE ARE

A Code Enforcement Officer is an agent of the county with the authority to enforce any provision of the Bay County Nuisance Ordinance and Land Development regulations. The division currently consists of seven code enforcement officers, one coordinator, one staff assistant, and one manager.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

After the storm, the role of Code Enforcement was dynamic. The county suspended normal code enforcement regulations, so the Code Enforcement Division supported all things recovery related.

Five days after the storm, we began initial assessments to determine the extent of the damage. Once disaster relief officials arrived, we assisted other county teams. Two officers were loaned to the Builders Services Division for building inspections and to assist customers in the permitting office. Our code enforcement inspector completed 973 permit inspections. Three officers were assigned to the Animal Control Division, providing aid at the animal shelter as well as the Arnold High School Red Cross Aid Shelter. Along with Solid Waste Division workers, other officers went door to door distributing forms to citizens on 330 miles of private roadways to register for debris removal. Officers were assigned to the Emergency Operations Center to help set up and take down temporary office spaces. To help the Facilities Management Division, officers conducted damage assessments of all county-owned properties. Code Enforcement worked alongside Public Works to survey locations for potential FEMA housing as well as set up high-tech cameras to monitor and curtail illegal dumping. While performing all of these duties, officers removed nearly 20,000 snipe signs from public right-of-ways.

In the office, Code staff worked directly with FEMA contractors to approve and issue permits for temporary housing. Two hundred thirty-eight properties received one or more FEMA travel trailers and mobile homes. Five large FEMA group sites were planned and approved for an additional 186 units in the Cedar Grove area. Code Enforcement also assisted citizens with private authorizations – 328 parcels were approved for temporary housing. As part of this process, Code staff worked with Builders Services to learn how to issue building permits. In all, 412 permits were issued by Code Enforcement for temporary power poles, pre-power inspections, and FEMA mobile home installations.

In April, Code Enforcement started preparations to address hurricane-damaged properties. The Property Appraiser's office provided Code Enforcement with a quick assessment list they compiled shortly after the storm. Code evaluated the list of more than 8,000 properties, and inspected more than 1,300 significantly damaged ones. At the same time, Tetra Tech, a disaster recovery contractor, moved into the Code office to assist Bay County citizens with the FEMA Private Property Debris Removal Program (PPDR). The PPDR program is sponsored by FEMA, the State of Florida, and Bay County and is designed to help citizens demolish structures and clear dangerous debris. To date, 1,068 property owners have applied for the program. Officers helped the Tetra Tech team complete site inspections and will coordinate demolitions once they begin. At the end of Fiscal Year 2019, Code staff was working to combine the PPDR and Property Appraiser data to create a final list of properties that may need further attention in 2020.

Standard code enforcement in western Bay County began on Jan. 1, 2019. Some 512 cases were investigated in the Panama City Beach area through September. Additionally, 319 non storm-related cases were opened in the eastern areas. In 2020, Code Enforcement will begin addressing all abandoned, unsafe structures.



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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



TOM HARRIS

Like many Bay County citizens, Code Enforcement Investigator Tom Harris weathered the storm in his home. Tom's experience may have been more frightening than many: He was home alone with his four dogs, as his wife is essential staff at the Bay County Sheriff's Office. Tom is an Air Force veteran, a twice-retired law enforcement officer, a licensed concealed weapons and active shooter instructor and has been with Code Enforcement since 2015, so it is an understatement to say that he is prepared for anything. As the strength of the hurricane intensified, Tom realized he needed to find a safe space to bunker down. He grabbed a mattress and the dogs, and barricaded himself in a closet. As the winds began to subside, he realized his home had crumbled around him, leaving them trapped. His neighbor saw the devastation of his house, came looking for Tom, and helped dig them out. Once they were safe, Tom and his neighbors banded together and started going house to house, helping and checking on others. Since the storm, Tom has been part of the Code team that has tirelessly helped others wherever needed.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

planning & zoning

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



WAYNE PORTER

Wayne Porter, certified floodplain manager, weathered Hurricane Michael in the Sand Hills area where fortunately, his property sustained minimal damage. His parents, however, lost their home of 30 years to the storm. After the hurricane, Wayne worked to help his parents salvage any personal belongings they could while coordinating efforts to replace his childhood home. During this time he also assisted other family, friends, and neighbors with their storm damage, and then went to the Emergency Operations Center to help in any way possible.

Wayne manages the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System. This program helps ensure safe development and provides for reduction in flood insurance premiums for the citizens of Bay County. The massive devastation of Hurricane Michael has obviously caused the complete rebuilding of hundreds of homes in Bay County. Wayne has tirelessly worked with citizens and surveyors on explaining floodplain management and land development regulations to ensure safe and proper redevelopment. This was a difficult task at times, as FEMA regulations would often require home and business owners to bring their structures up to current flood elevation requirements, resulting in a much longer and more costly recovery time. He has also attended community events to talk to citizen groups about floodplain management and how to work the new flood zones that FEMA is adopting in 2021. He and his expertise have been vital to the Planning Division and the county during recovery.



WHO WE ARE

The Planning Division's mission is to affect an orderly and efficient growth pattern that promotes economic development and enhances the environment, aesthetics, and quality of life in Bay County.

The division is staffed by certified planners, a Florida-registered professional civil engineer, a certified floodplain manager, a senior planner, and administrative staff dedicated to providing quality examination and review of new development projects for the citizens of Bay County. We also manage requests for artificial reefs, sign permits, conditional use permits, variances, and land-use and zoning changes.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

The Planning and Zoning Division is located on the second floor of the Government Center. Our offices were one of several destroyed when the roof was torn off by Hurricane Michael. We quickly established residency within the Code Enforcement Division in an effort to provide immediate assistance to the residents of Bay County. It took six months for our offices to be repaired.

During this time, our small, five-member team faced personal and professional challenges. Phone inquiries and walk-in traffic increased by 200 percent. Planning staff worked with the Bay County Commission on drafting temporary housing regulations. Focused on providing timely post-disaster public service, the Planning Division worked closely with the Code Enforcement and the Builders Services divisions to review and approve secondary dwellings, recreational vehicles, and mobile homes and power pole permits for citizens to allow for temporary housing on their storm-damaged property.

We also worked with FEMA and local housing officials on the review, permitting, and approval for FEMA group site housing programs. The Planning Division worked with many affected local commercial business owners on review and temporary approvals for their redevelopment.

The Planning Division also took the lead on the Planning and Capacity Building Branch of the Bay County Long-Term Recovery Task Force and Recovery Plan. The Planning Division worked with the other branches of the task force and held several public meetings to hear and learn about community issues, needs, and concerns regarding the rebuilding and redevelopment of Bay County.

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stay prepared in an emergency.



When disaster strikes, how will you and your family be notified? **Protect yourself and your loved ones in Bay County by signing up for AlertBay Emergency Notifications.**

ALERTBAY: A Mass Notification System

In Bay County, we use AlertBay, a partnership with the State of Florida's Division of Emergency Management and the AlertFlorida mass notification system, to keep our citizens and visitors informed.

The system is extremely valuable in keeping residents, visitors, government staff, and emergency personnel safe and in-the-know with quick and reliable emergency notifications and public safety announcements about a range of events, such as severe weather, fires, floods, active shooters, or other emergencies. Messages are sent to residents on their preferred contact paths—cell phone, SMS text messaging, home phone, email, and more—to ensure real-time access to potentially lifesaving information. The program is funded entirely by the state, saving Bay County taxpayers more than \$100,000 annually.

AlertBay was put to the test in the days leading up to and in the weeks following Hurricane Michael. Some 10,000 new contacts were added to the AlertBay system from September 2018 through October 2018, bringing the total reach of the system to almost 161,000 contacts.

In FY19, AlertBay issued more than 542 notifications between the county, municipalities, law enforcement, and the school district. In October 2018, AlertBay was used to send more than 2 million messages to more than 1 million recipients regarding Hurricane Michael preparedness and response activities. In November, the messaging continued with more than 700,000 messages sent to nearly 300,000 recipients. We also geo-targeted notifications to those who provided location information, sending life-safety information after the storm, such as where to find the nearest point-of-distribution site. After the storm, staff used the system in innovative ways, including disseminating polling information for the 2018 elections.

To ensure notification when a specific location in Bay County is threatened by an event or severe weather, simply register an address and contact information into an AlertBay profile, available at www.alertbay.org. Users may set up a separate profile for each person in a household to ensure that each person gets the message. Once a message is confirmed, the system will not make any further contact about the event.

With multiple ways to subscribe, the free Everbridge app is the recommended way to receive alerts from AlertBay, as it allows alerts from throughout the state of Florida. Bay County has the highest download of the app per capita in the entire state, according to Everbridge.

AlertBay is a partnership between Bay County, the Bay County Sheriff's Office and local municipalities, and the school district, enabling each entity to send out emergency calls specific to their citizens and visitors.

Visitors to Bay County can subscribe to AlertBay by texting the keyword **ALERTBAY** to **888777**, and opt in to receive important alerts during their stay.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
ALERTBAY OR FOR HELP REGISTERING,
CONTACT BAY COUNTY EMERGENCY
SERVICES AT (850) 248-6040.**

USAGE INFORMATION

MONTH OF BROADCAST	RECIPIENTS	MESSAGES
NOV	282,797	728,997
OCT	1,096,586	2,064,431

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



LESIL TAYLOR

Lesil Taylor, E-911 specialist, is not a first responder in the traditional sense; however, she is one of the most important responders in our county. At 23 years with the county, Lesil manages and maintains the county's dispatch equipment and all the main 911 services in the entire system.

The 911 system has to function, and a system malfunction could be the difference between life and death.

This was especially true during and after Hurricane Michael when virtually all other communications were lost. Amid the hundreds of calls ringing into the call center on Oct. 10, 2018, Lesil worked to keep our center running, including helping to reroute all secondary call centers including Tyndall Air Force Base, Lynn Haven, Panama City, Panama City Beach, and Springfield to the county call center. Due in great part to her efforts and her years of preparation, we never lost 911 communications before, during, or after Hurricane Michael.

Lesil has worked ceaselessly with vendors and contractors in the year following Michael to restore these call centers, performing many of the precise repairs, installations, and maintenance on technically detailed systems herself.

By Dec. 19, 2018, all the secondary call centers were fully operational with the exception of Lynn Haven, whose building was destroyed. On Aug. 18, 2019, Lynn Haven Police Department's call center was brought back online.

Lesil makes sure that the system works and works properly and she does so despite her own storm losses. Almost a year passed before her own personal repairs were made, but this never slowed down the work she did for the citizens and first responders of Bay County.



WHO WE ARE

Emergency Management is responsible for coordinating the emergency preparedness efforts of the county. We provide assistance to local jurisdictions and county agencies before, during, and after disaster strikes.

Our department manages the Emergency Operations Center, which facilitates planning and aid in the aftermath of a disaster. The center is made up of a staff of professionals and liaisons from area public safety agencies, non-governmental organizations, schools, military partners, and other key community stakeholders.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

The Bay County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated to a Level 1 on Oct. 9, 2018, as it became apparent that the area would feel impacts from what was then forecast to be a Category 3 storm. And as Hurricane Michael's intensity quickly escalated, so did the need for outside help.

Records now show that more than 3,000 individuals signed in at the EOC in those hours before and in the days and weeks following the storm. Some 21 Incident Management Teams (IMTs) from throughout Florida and as far away as Oregon and Maryland, another 12 Search and Rescue teams from throughout the nation, six Florida Telecommunicator Emergency Response Task Force (TERT) teams, contingents from military branches, law enforcement and fire rescue agencies, volunteer organizations, and healthcare providers all converged on Bay County with the EOC as the epicenter of it all.

During a "normal" Type 3 incident, say, a small hurricane or tropical storm, the event could be easily managed with a few dozen bodies at the EOC, Bay County Emergency Management Chief Frankie Lumm said.

"This was a Type 1, national incident. It quickly outgrew all of our local resources; this was the largest thing I've ever been a part of," Lumm, who has an extensive background in emergency management, said. "We had more than 4,500 missions submitted to the state that we carried out to assist people with things like food, water, shelter, medical care, transport out of the community, and more. All of that is run out of the EOC, and the IMTs are the ones doing it."

At any given time during the response, the Bay County EOC had 380 people running around-the-clock operations.

"We constructed a base camp that housed from 900 to 1,200 people – we usually had about 1,100 people in there," Lumm said. As an example, out-of-town law enforcement and search and rescue teams would sleep at the base camp, gather at local big box store parking lots to plan for the day, then go out into the community to work.

The IMTs that deployed to the EOC are intended to augment the local staff – emergency managers throughout the country all train to use the National Incident Management System so that an outsider can come into an area and fit seamlessly into the response effort.

"With emergency management, everything starts local and stays local," Lumm said. "Because of our training, it's 'plug and play'. Any of us can work anywhere within the same team."

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

emergency management

For example, a team from Lee County, Florida, managed the county's sheltering operations, focusing on mass care, feeding, and sheltering.

Another team from Ohio managed the points of distribution (PODs) where the public could get food, water, tarps, and more.

"We had pre-storm designated areas where we were going to do all of this distribution," Lumm said. "Every one of those places was damaged or destroyed, so they had to go out and make arrangements with business owners on the fly to make it happen. They did an amazing job."

Public Safety Communication System Upgrade

The Bay County Public Safety Communication System is responsible for providing county-wide public safety two-way radio communications, fire alert paging, radio dispatch console systems, and microwave linking systems for the entire county.

The current analog system is being upgraded to a \$13 million digital system that provides more coverage and faster response times. The project is funded through a partnership with local municipalities and from a portion of traffic fines.

The work was delayed by Hurricane Michael, as existing towers required extensive repairs, but is moving forward with the acquisition of three new tower sites. System installation begins in the fall of 2019 and will continue through 2020.

Emergency Alerts

AlertBay continued to grow in 2019 with more than 542 notifications between the county, municipalities, law enforcement, and the school district. With multiple ways to subscribe, the free Everbridge app continues to be the recommended way to receive alerts from AlertBay, as it offers alerts from throughout the state of Florida.

During October 2018, AlertBay was used to send more than 2 million messages to more than 1 million recipients regarding Hurricane Michael preparedness and response activities. In November, the messaging continued with more than 700,000 messages sent to nearly 300,000 recipients. AlertBay was used alongside Emergency Services' social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to provide critical life safety messages and pertinent information to the public and agency and media partners. Emergency Services used geo-targeting to notify those who provided location data to send targeted life-safety information after Hurricane Michael, such as where to find the nearest point-of-distribution site.

The Wireless Emergency Alerting (WEA) and the Emergency Alerting System (EAS) were used for the first time during Hurricane Michael with the hope of reaching the most people as possible.

To sign up for AlertBay, download the Everbridge App and search for AlertBay under "Profile", or visit www.alertbay.org.

Training

In the aftermath of a disaster like Hurricane Michael, one of the greatest challenges is maintaining adequate staffing levels of the communications centers. Fortunately, for our call center, the Florida Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT) deployed to our aid. For weeks, these telecommunicators from all over the state manned our communications center so our employees could take the time to see to the needs of their own families and homes.

A total of 39 FL-TERT members responded to Bay County.

It is important to our telecommunicators that they someday be able to return the favor. In June 2018, the Bay County EOC hosted "Preparing for Emergency Communication Center Deployments" training. The training was offered to telecommunicators statewide.

When and if our telecommunicators are needed, we are ready to answer the call.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Our combined Communications Center was recognized by APCO "Association of Public Safety Communications Officials" as the "Team of the Year" for Communications Centers for the work performed during Hurricane Michael. Both county and Bay County Sheriff's Office telecommunicators overcame incredible hardships and answered heartbreaking calls, including calls from their own family members.
- Former Bay County Emergency Management Division Chief Joby Smith was awarded the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association's "Chad Reed" Emergency Management Professional of the Year.
- The State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) for Hazardous Materials selected Brooke Powell, Emergency Services Administrative Officer, to receive the Thomas Yatabe Certificate of Outstanding Achievement.
- The National Weather Service presented Bay County Emergency Services staff with the StormReady Award, marking only the eighth time the National Weather Service has given the award to a community since it was created in 2002.



CALL INFORMATION

INCIDENTS DISPATCHED	TYPE OF CALL	% OF CALLS
FIRE	9,541	15.1%
EMS	29,814	54.8%
EOC (R&B, ETC)	563	0.9%
7 OTHER AGENCIES WE PROVIDE FIRE DISPATCH FOR	19,336	29.2%
TOTAL	59,254	100.00%
PHONE CALLS (911/INCOMING & OUTGOING ADMIN)		
FIRE/EOC	52,467	54.2%
Fire Admin	45,281	41.5%
EMS Admin	8,110	4.3%
TOTAL	105,858	100.00%

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



AMBER LEACH (LEFT) &
ALEXANDRIA STREAM (RIGHT)

AMBER LEACH & ALEXANDRIA STREAM

The Paramedic Program at Gulf Coast State College (GCSC) is a grueling, three-semester program that is offered once a year, beginning in the fall semester. Paramedic students log more than 1,200 on-the-clock classroom and clinical hours by working shifts in either of two local hospitals.

After Category 5 Hurricane Michael caused both hospitals catastrophic damages and closed GCSC for 27 days, the post-storm workload was exhausting, and paramedics Amber Leach and Alexandria Stream both faced personal losses and challenges.

GCSC EMS Program Director Steve White applauds their commitment, saying: "In spite of losing a month of class time and working almost nonstop in their full-time jobs as EMTs, these students remained focused. It was a very real challenge figuring out how to get clinical hours completed when both hospitals were no longer functioning."

But despite the obstacles life threw at them, White said they took it in stride. In a class that started with 12 students, only four completed the program.

On Aug. 2, 2018, their hard work and dedication paid off, and both were presented their paramedic pins. Leach was honored with an academic achievement award for having the top marks in the program.

WHO WE ARE

Bay County Emergency Medical Services Division (EMS) is a state-licensed Advanced Life Support (paramedic level) service. We answer all 911 emergency calls for service throughout Bay County, including the municipalities of Callaway, Lynn Haven, Panama City, Panama City Beach, Parker, and Springfield, along with the unincorporated portions of Bay County such as Southport, West Bay, Bayou George, Youngstown, and Fountain. Bay County EMS is the sole 911 Mobile Intensive Care transport service for Bay County.

Working in conjunction with our municipal and county first-responder fire department and law-enforcement partners, Bay County EMS answers almost 30,000 calls for service each year. We provide emergency care, treatment, and transport for incidents such as heart attacks, strokes, illness, traumatic injuries, vehicle accidents, water rescues, industrial incidents, and rescues and structure fires (in support of our fire department partners). We have 80 Florida-licensed EMTs and paramedics operating under the medical direction of Dr. Linda Fox. EMS operates between seven and 10 mobile intensive-care ambulances along with field operations command staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week from nine strategically placed stations located throughout Bay County.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

In the days, weeks, and months after Hurricane Michael, EMTs and paramedics proved they were adaptable and resilient. Initially, EMS staff had to respond through hazardous conditions to take patients to barely-functioning local emergency rooms. Communications were limited to two-way radios. Street signs were missing or non-existent; staff used paper maps to navigate the miles of barely recognizable roadways throughout the county.

Every action required thought and planning, from where they would eat their next meal to how they would check in with their supervisors and coworkers. Stations were damaged beyond repair and alternative living quarters were scarce.

In spite of this high stress and coupled with the fact that, for days, many of these first responders had no communication with their families and suffered great personal loss, our EMS team maintained professionalism and offered stellar pre-hospital care.

As recovery continues, staff still face challenges. Recruiting to our area is difficult and many of our openings go unfilled, causing an increased workload.

- Bay County opened seven shelters for Hurricane Michael. EMS staff provided medical support and standby for all shelters, including at the special-needs shelters. The first shelters opened on Oct. 9, 2018 and the last shelter closed Nov. 30, 2018. This was the longest-running shelter operation in Florida history.
- In addition to shelter support, EMS also provided medical support and standby at numerous events and facilities including Disaster Supplemental Food Assistance Program (D-SNAP), community gatherings, and recovery centers.
- Our paramedics and EMTs constantly train to provide the best pre-hospital treatment possible. Throughout the year, we hosted numerous internal training courses. Several of our EMS employees are certified trainers, which saves the taxpayer thousands of dollars annually.
- The Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) course teaches EMS practitioners and other prehospital providers how to respond to and care for patients in a civilian tactical environment. The 16-hour classroom course includes patient simulations and covers strategies for treating wounded responders in threatening environments, caring for pediatric patients, and techniques for dragging and carrying victims to safety. This important training was held in May at the Emergency Operations Center.
- In July, EMS instructors hosted a Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) course. The course covers topics such as breathing, ventilation, oxygenation, circulation, hemorrhage and shock, and patients with disabilities. Patient simulations allow for a hands-on learning experience for students.
- Advanced cardiac life support, or advanced cardiovascular life support, often referred to by its abbreviation as "ACLS", refers to a set of clinical interventions for the urgent treatment of cardiac arrest, stroke, myocardial infarction, and other life-threatening cardiovascular emergencies, as well as the knowledge and skills to deploy those interventions. Only qualified health care providers can provide ACLS, as it requires the ability to manage the person's airway, initiate intravenous (IV) access, read and interpret electrocardiograms, and understand emergency pharmacology.

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

emergency medical services (ems)

- Several EMS and Fire Rescue employees attended a Geriatric Emergency Medical Services (GEMS) class in March. The course provides innovative approaches to elder care training. For example, impairing the vision of students through sunglasses illustrates how an elderly patient could mistakenly take the wrong medication. The GEMS program was developed by the National Association of State EMS Training Coordinators and the American Geriatric Society. The program is designed to meet the need for additional training in geriatrics for EMS providers.
- We began using Stryker powered stretchers. The repetition of loading and unloading stretchers in and out of an ambulance day after day can take its toll, commonly causing back injury. This new stretcher system allows EMS personnel to do their jobs more safely by raising, lowering, loading and unloading the stretcher at the touch of a button.
- Nine Lifeline ARM devices, aimed at increasing the effectiveness of prolonged cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), were placed on BCEMS ambulances in May 2019. In an emergency the Lifeline ARM when used as an adjunct to manual CPR, provides extended CPR with minimal interruptions when fatigue, insufficient personnel, or patient transport may prohibit the delivery of effective/consistent compressions to the victim. The devices are also compatible with the devices Panama City Beach Fire Rescue uses in their patient rescues. When a patient is transferred from PCBFR to Bay County EMS, CPR is uninterrupted.
- We received 16 LIFEPAK 15 monitor/defibrillators designed for basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) patient management protocols. These state-of-the-art machines constantly monitor heart rates and alert the users to sudden changes. The LIFEPAK monitor/defibrillator collects patient data and shares patient information from the devices to other patient care systems (hospital emergency rooms). This consolidation of patient health information allows for a seamless transfer of the patient from EMS care to hospital care.
- The combined EMS and Fire Honor Guard continues to perform with distinction at parades, graduations, community events, and funerals. Several of the members participate even though they, like so many of their colleagues, suffered great loss from Hurricane Michael. This year, the Honor Guard added a bagpiper with the hire of EMT Laura Kerr.
- We continued to participate in community events, including as medical standbys for high school football games. The “#FridayNightLights” campaign is popular on the Bay County, FL Emergency Services Facebook page. EMS also participates in other school events, field trips, and high-profile events such as the IronMan and Gulf Coast triathlons.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

An Outstanding Service Award was presented by the Arnold National Honor Society to EMS and Emergency Management staff for their work at the shelter at Arnold High School. The shelter opened on Oct. 30, 2018 and housed 721 people and their pets. FEMA, the Florida Department of Emergency Management, Bay County, and the American Red Cross provided case management and assistance to the shelter clients. EMS staff managed the county operations and provided daily medical support. The shelter closed Nov. 30, 2018.

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners honored EMS with a proclamation during EMS Week 2019 on May 22, 2019.

EMS Coordinator Gayle Rogers was honored for 25 years of service. Gayle, affectionately known as the “Major” by our EMTs and paramedics, keeps her troops marching to her orders with patience and a lot of tough love.

Lt. Bridgette Whately attained two prestigious instructor certifications from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine: Acute Coronary Syndrome and Advanced Life Support. Lt. Whately brings back her knowledge and will use it to train county EMS employees and students in the Gulf Coast State College public safety program.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



WILLARD "BRAD" PRICE (RIGHT)

WILLARD "BRAD" PRICE

Bay County Emergency Services was devastated by the news on Oct. 18, 2018 that Firefighter-Paramedic Willard "Brad" Price died in a tragic accident at his home as he cleaned hurricane debris on his first day off after the storm.

Firefighter Price was born on June 28, 1969 in Port St. Joe. He was a family man who enjoyed hunting, fishing, and doted on his children and grandchildren. He was a fixture on the football and softball fields and was constantly fundraising for various organizations.

Brad began his tenure with the county in December 2012. In addition to being a full-time employee with Bay County Fire Rescue, he also served as the Gulf County Fire coordinator, a firefighter-paramedic for Gulf County, taught CPR classes, and received many advanced firefighting certificates. Before coming to Bay County, Brad worked for Lynn Haven Fire and Emergency Services.

Known for his positive outlook, easy-going personality, and his quick sense of humor, Brad was the first to mentor rookie firefighters. He was a leader in our department and respected for his calm and efficient demeanor. As an instructor at Chipola College, he crossed paths with countless first responders from numerous agencies. He leaves a legacy for not only Bay County, but Gulf and Jackson counties as well.

A traditional firefighter funeral with full honors was held Oct. 24, 2018 at Wewahitchka High School Football Field. Honor guards from across the state traveled to ensure the service befitting our hero. We miss him daily, speak of him often, and remember him fondly. A plaque to Firefighter Price can be viewed at the Sand Hills Fire Station on Highway 77.



WHO WE ARE

Bay County Fire Rescue (BCFR) serves the rural and suburban unincorporated areas of Bay County responding to structure and wildland fires as well as first responder calls in assistance to Bay County Emergency Medical Services. Bay County Fire Rescue also responds to mutual aid and automatic aid calls with county municipal fire departments. The Bay County Hazardous Materials Team is operated by Fire Rescue and responds throughout the region to assist fire departments and law-enforcement agencies with hazardous materials issues. BCFR consists of 60 career personnel and 75 volunteers. BCFR occupies 13 stations in unincorporated Bay County.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

- The events of Hurricane Michael showed how valuable the fire department is to our community. In the first days after the storm, county firefighters worked alongside road crews, linemen, and citizens in the unincorporated areas to clear roads and right-of-ways to restore power, water, and other critical resources.
- Even though three of our stations were damaged and eventually razed, several other stations became hubs for the community. We were amazed by the generosity of our citizens for our toy drives for the children of Bay County at Christmas. The bays of our stations filled up with toys and bikes that were handed out at the county's annual Christmas Tree Lighting or donated to Bay District Schools' daycares. Presents were also delivered to the children of the Youngstown and Fountain districts via Santa and his special sleigh, a firetruck.

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

fire rescue

- For several months, the county supported a food, clothing, and supply distribution operation at the Fountain Fire Department, including placing a refrigeration unit on site for perishables. Thousands of citizens took advantage of the resources available at the station, manned by volunteers.
- The Youngstown Fire Department hosted an office for the Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR) program for several months. Youngstown also serves as a site for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Bay County Fire Rescue continues to focus on the needs of our hardest hit rural communities by participating in community events, including movie nights, flag raisings, and fire details at elementary schools.
- Secondary emergencies are common after disasters. In response to the numerous wildfires that popped up after Hurricane Michael, firefighters partnered with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) on a grant for training and equipment. All of our firefighters received wildland fire training specifically designed for the unique hazards of the downed trees and vegetative debris from the hurricane. BCFR also partnered with the FFS on an outreach initiative on social and traditional media on outdoor burning and reducing wildfire threats.
- The Allanton Road Fire began March 31, 2018 and burned through April 5. The fire highlighted the wildfire concerns from the fuel load of Hurricane Michael. The fire quickly spread to almost 700 acres, threatened several homes, prompted evacuations, and required several days of manpower from multiple agencies. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Agriculture Commissioner Niki Fried visited with firefighters and were briefed on critical needs of our firefighting operations.
- BCFR is one of two Department of Homeland Security-funded hazardous materials teams in our region. All our firefighters are required to complete 160 hours of HazMat Technician training. They are also required to complete refresher training quarterly to maintain certifications. The team is active at local events, including a detail monitoring the presidential visit to Panama City Beach, the IronMan triathlon, and Gulf Coast Jam.
- In June, BCFR had an unusual rescue after a rider was stuck 55 feet in the air on an amusement ride. Bay County firefighters on Thomas Drive Ladder 1 and Panama City Fire Department's Urban Search and Rescue Team worked together to free the shaken, but uninjured, rider.
- Over the summer months, members of BCFR's Water Rescue Team participated in numerous water rescues. The team, led by firefighter Paul Hagan, trains regularly on rescue equipment and applications, surf entries, conscious and unconscious victim rescues, pier/jetty rescues, communications, scuba-related illness, general medical, and trauma.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- First responders throughout the area served selflessly during Hurricane Michael, often sacrificing their own needs to the service of our citizens. Thank you to The Today Show and Al Roker for shining the spotlight on our very deserving heroes.
- Ben Collier was recognized with an "Honor the Badge" segment on WMBB for his ingenuity in restoring power to WKGC, the Gulf Coast State College radio station. WKGC is co-located at the Emergency Operations Center in Southport. Just hours after the storm, Collier's repairs to the station's generator had them back on air. For days following Hurricane Michael, WKGC was one of the only sources of information for Bay, Washington, Gulf, Calhoun, Jackson, and Franklin Counties.
- The Optimist Club of the Beaches presents Firefighter of the Year Awards annually. Firefighter Morgan Cronk received the award for Thomas Drive Fire Station. Nate Pennington received the award for the West End Fire Station.
- Firefighter Pennington also had a viral internet hit with a song called "Strong and Proud," featuring local musician Chris Leitz. The song, a tribute to the community response to Hurricane Michael, is available on social media platforms and Apple Music.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



MARY WIER

Animal Control Officer Mary Wier worked at Rutherford High School during Hurricane Michael keeping evacuees' animals calm and setting up for new arrivals. Seven members of her family, including her then eight-month-old daughter and 2-year-old son, fled to Montgomery, AL while her 75-year-old father-in-law stayed behind. Despite the hectic climate and lack of communication, she eventually received texts that her family was safe and on their way home.

Mary left the shelter on the Friday afternoon following the storm, eventually finding her way to her totally wrecked home through the no longer familiar path. She initially could not find her in-laws house, due to downed trees. Fortunately, the house was intact despite missing nearly all its shingles. All nine members of her family ended up sleeping in the same room with a generator running one air conditioner, a DVD player, and a charger. The following weeks at work were filled with cleaning kennels at the shelter, fixing fences, donating pet food/water/kennels to residents, and helping the displaced care for their pets.

As of one year later, Mary had a new home under construction. Sadly, her father-in-law and her grandfather passed away in January. Mary and her family are still staying with her in-laws, but they do have a new metal roof on the house. Thankfully, her kids are young enough to be unaffected by the storm damage. "I would not have made it without the help of my coworkers and community, which I will always be grateful for," Mary said.



WHO WE ARE

Bay County Animal Control is responsible for protecting the public's health and safety and enforcing Florida state statutes and Bay County ordinances related to animal issues and owners' responsibility for animals. Services are provided to all of the municipalities in Bay County, except the City of Lynn Haven, through interlocal agreements. Our goal is to protect the interests of animals, owners, and non-owners alike.

We are also responsible for the operations of Bay County's only open-admission animal shelter where all stray, unowned, and owned animals are accepted. We provide daily care for these animals while working to reunite them with their owners or find them a new home. Our shelter serves as the location for all Animal Control operations.

The Animal Control Division has 15 staff members, all of whom are trained to handle any of the tasks related to our operation.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Due to Hurricane Michael, our division had to operate outside of our normal protocols while working to maintain the public's health and safety. Our responsibilities to the community included the following:

- Immediately prior to the storm and after, Animal Control staff worked at the three pet-friendly shelters. This included setting up the locations, relocation of the shelter occupants and animals to undamaged facilities, 24-hour staffing of the pet areas, and providing necessary care items for the animals. These services were provided until the shelters closed.
- In addition to the pet-friendly shelters, we continued to provide care for the animals that remained at the county shelter. When the facility had no power, staff had to travel to a local well with jugs to get fresh water for the animals and cleaning of the facility.
- More than 300 animals came in and were housed at the county shelter. Due to the number of animals, modifications had to be made to the shelter operations impacting the daily care, feeding, and exercise of the animals at the facility.

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- Since there were no working phones at the county shelter, it remained staffed and open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily to allow people who came to the shelter to receive assistance as needed. Medical assistance was provided to animals as needed.
- Animal Control officers traveled throughout the county with supplies for animals and humans. The officers were able to assist people with their animals, help construct temporary holding facilities for and/or with owners, pick up strays, and provide information as requested. Our team was joined by Pinellas County Animal Control officers who assisted with road duty and shelter operations.
- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) responded to the area and assisted in multiple ways. They responded to citizen calls for service, rescued animals in distress, assisted in setting up temporary animal holding facilities, leveraged their volunteers to assist with shelter duties and leveraged their resources to provide live-release options for the large numbers of animals impacted by Hurricane Michael.
- Because of communication issues in the area, the ASPCA set up a phone number outside the area for citizens to call with animal issues. When the ASPCA received a call, it was routed to our agency via cell phone and an officer was dispatched to the address. This process remained in place after the ASPCA left the area, as there were still communication issues.
- Since the storm, we have seen an increase in the number of stray and/or at large animals and owned animals being turned in to the shelter. Citizens lost their fences and have not rebuilt or repaired them, others have left the area leaving their animals behind or have turned in their animals because they lost their home. Locating animal owners became very difficult as microchip addresses and phone numbers were no longer accurate.
- We have also seen a large increase in the number of puppies and kittens coming into the shelter. We believe this is related to the number of animals that are unaltered and were no longer being contained. Additionally, there was very limited access to low cost vet care over many months, including the services provided by Operation Spay Bay.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



NATHAN FLOYD

Parks and Recreation Foreman Nathan Floyd's home sustained severe damage during Hurricane Michael, but his performance in the recovery efforts following the storm were nothing short of outstanding. Nathan was at work the day after the storm passed, ready and willing to do whatever was asked of him. He played an integral role in initiating immediate damage assessments, safety inspections, and cleanup of the county's parks. Nathan continued these efforts throughout the months following the storm, which allowed spring baseball to be played at Hiland Park and Southport ball parks and spring soccer at H.G. Harder's Park. Nathan has also been critical in assisting with FEMA damage inspections and developing work scopes and coordinating permanent repairs to various park facilities. The Bay County Parks and Recreation Division commends Nathan on his outstanding efforts during this period and thank him for his diligence in ensuring that the citizens of Bay County have safe and attractive parks available.



WHO WE ARE

The Parks and Recreation Division maintains all recreational facilities within the unincorporated county for the optimal enjoyment of residents and visitors. With 26 recreational parks, 21 boat ramps, 44 beach easements, the county pier, and a shooting range, the maintenance of these facilities is provided by park staff. We plan for the future recreational needs of our citizens by changing or expanding our programs and parks to reflect the needs of the county's population.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

On Oct. 10, 2018, Category 5 Hurricane Michael caused widespread and major damage to the county's park facilities. Since that day, the Parks and Recreation Division has focused on recovery and repairs to county park infrastructure, while at the same time attempting to provide continuity of park services for the community. The Parks and Recreation staff has spent many, many hours assisting in this recovery effort, while at the same time dealing with their own personal issues associated Hurricane Michael. Our staff has risen to the occasion and has been integral in providing some normalcy to the community following this devastating event.

- Both the Hiland Park and Southport Recreational complexes sustained major damage. The Parks and Recreation staff worked diligently to ensure that the children of these communities were able to have a successful spring baseball season.
- H.G. Harder's Park sustained major damage and staff worked diligently to clean up the facility to ensure that the annual Easter Egg Hunt was able to take place.
- The lower soccer fields at Harder's Park were utilized as a staging area for the FEMA base of operations during the initial recovery efforts after the storm, and the fields were left in terrible condition. Staff was able to make repairs to the fields to allow for youth soccer to be played there in the spring.

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- Parks and Recreation staff effectively secured safety concerns and sustained the general maintenance of the county parks as each park reopened for public use in the months following the hurricane.
- Majette Park sustained major damage and park staff succeeded in preparing the park to host several Bay District Schools cross country meets.
- County pier staff played an integral role in ensuring that the Sand Jam music festival event was a success.
- The Parks and Recreation staff continue to provide service to the community's athletic programs through innovative and progressive ideas, utilizing facilities that are still not operating at 100 percent.
- Park staff assisted the Solid Waste Division by providing employees to operate equipment at the Steelfield Landfill, which was inundated with debris caused by Hurricane Michael.
- Parks and Recreation staff continues to work with FEMA in compiling damage reports and developing strategies to initiate projects that will provide damage mitigation to facilities in the event of future emergency situations.
- Parks and Recreation staff continues to coordinate and manage major damage repair projects to park infrastructure in excess of \$3 million.



GENERAL SERVICES

solid waste

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



MICHELLE RUNYON (LEFT) & CASSIE ALLEN (RIGHT)

MICHELLE RUNYON & CASSIE ALLEN

Hurricane Michael left employees Michelle Runyon, staff assistant, and Cassie Allen, solid waste weighmaster, homeless for a short period of time immediately following the storm. The apartment they shared received severe structural damage; the roof was gone, and it was uninhabitable. All of their belongings were destroyed, apart from a few small items and some clothing that they could salvage. Both of their vehicles were damaged and inoperable.

Division staff assisted in relocating them, their two dogs, and their few remaining possessions to the Solid Waste administration offices, where they took temporary shelter until they received assistance through FEMA.

Both employees slept on air mattresses in the office at night and resumed their normal duties during the day, when the landfill opened for business. Michelle and Cassie are to be commended for the fact that they stayed with us during this trying time, instead of relocating to another area.



WHO WE ARE

The Solid Waste Division provides solid waste disposal, household hazardous material disposal, and recycling services for all of the citizens of Bay County. The division is comprised of the Bay County Waste to Energy (WTE) facility; the Steelfield Road Landfill; Recycling, Household Hazardous Waste and the Small-Quantity Generator environmental programs. The division is also responsible for the long-term care and environmental monitoring of Majette Park, which is a closed landfill. Solid Waste operates as an "Enterprise Fund," and as such does not receive tax dollars in the traditional sense. It is funded entirely from tipping fee revenues, electrical energy sales, and the sale of recovered metals extracted from the waste stream.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Hurricane Michael greatly impacted our operations. The incinerator facility received structural damage and was closed. All waste had to be sent directly to the landfill. Debris hauling contractors arrived from all across the country. Numerous new accounts had to be set up for debris contractors and haulers. Operational hours at the landfill increased to seven days per week, from 5:30 a.m. to as late as 9 p.m. Personnel from the Parks and Recreation Division and temporary staffing were utilized in an attempt to manage the increased workloads.

The Solid Waste Division is responsible for storm-related debris collection along the right-of-ways in the unincorporated portion of Bay County. During the recovery effort this was a huge task. It involved the coordination and monitoring of clean-up efforts of disaster debris management and monitoring contractors. During this time, the division acted as the point of



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contact for residents who had questions or concerns about our clean-up efforts. The amount of calls that were handled by our staff escalated to the point that temporary employees had to be hired just to handle the influx of incoming calls. The debris collection contractors collected 8.42 million cubic yards of material from the right-of-ways in unincorporated Bay County. Adding what was collected at Steelfield and in unincorporated Bay County ditches, we were up to 10.2 million cubic yards of debris. Between the county and all of its municipalities, more than 16.77 million cubic yards of debris was collected through the end of September 2019.

Two disaster debris monitoring (DDM) sites were opened at the Steelfield Landfill. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) operated the damaged boat debris site and county staff operated a second hurricane debris site at the landfill. The DDM site at the landfill was the repository for almost a half million cubic yards of debris. At one point, the landfill accepted more than 7,000 cubic yards of debris daily.

The Steelfield Landfill alone received 508,195 tons of waste material last year. Including the tonnages from Bay County Waste-to-Energy Facility, the division processed 625,000 tons of material. This is about a 400,000 ton increase from the prior year totals.

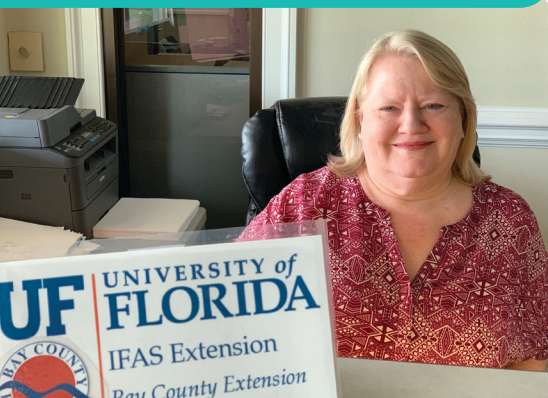
The number of customers entering the landfill greatly increased following the impact of Hurricane Michael. Prior to the storm, the landfill averaged less than a hundred vehicles per day. After the storm, during the height of the recovery effort, the landfill was accepting almost 600 vehicles per day.



HUMAN SERVICES

cooperative extension

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



DOREEN HICKS

Doreen Hicks grew up in Iowa and moved to Bay County as a teenager and graduated from Bay High School. She studied and has educational training in computer networking and repair. Doreen joined UF/IFAS Extension Bay County in 2004, serving as the office manager. Doreen provides administrative support to Extension faculty and is vital to the success and educational mission of the Extension office. Additionally, she oversees financial and budget activities that makes service to Bay County residents possible. Doreen built her home, which was destroyed by Hurricane Michael, in Lynn Haven over 40 years ago. She, like many, found temporary housing outside the impact area in Panama City Beach. Despite moving multiple times and additional hours commuting, she is still the smiling face that welcomes visitors to our office and the friendly voice greeting callers on the phone. She was able to move back to Lynn Haven in the summer of 2019 and is currently awaiting the reconstruction of her home. Outside of work Doreen is active in the community band, playing the trumpet. Her son, Kevin lives in north Alabama and visits often.



WHO WE ARE

UF/IFAS Extension Bay County provides educational information to Bay County citizens through the combined efforts of state and county faculty, staff, volunteers, advisory committees, and local partners. We apply research and university expertise to solve problems that relate to 4-H Youth Development, Horticulture, Marine/Coastal issues, and Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS).

Like many offices and people in Bay County, UF/IFAS Extension had many challenges in the past year due to Hurricane Michael. The mission of our office is to provide science-based information to the public to enhance their quality of life. As a result of the storm, the need for valid information was increased. However with our office damaged, we had to find alternative methods to communicate and respond to community recovery needs.

"We valued the opportunity to serve our community during this critical time. We offered information and recommendations that help people with their recovery. Whether it's about what to do about downed trees or how to recover your boat, people are coming to us now more than ever with their questions. We've also found that Facebook and social media have been a great tool for connecting with people and getting out the information to help them," said Scott Jackson, Extension director, and Sea Grant faculty.

When Julie McConnell, Horticultural faculty, gets a phone call about a lawn and garden question, the conversation inevitably turns to Hurricane Michael. "They're calling with a tree question, but you end up knowing the whole story of their life over the past year—if they stayed or if they left, if they're back in their home. More than ever, we spend more time just talking with people, hearing their stories," McConnell said. "We're more personally connected with the people we serve. The number of contacts our volunteers have made over the last year are double what they were before. This increased engagement with the public is a chance for us to educate more people about good landscaping practices, especially now that many are rebuilding their landscapes from scratch."

The 4-H program was also impacted. "The Navy base and library have been so good to us, letting us hold our summer day camps at their facilities. We have several new partnerships since Michael," Paula Davis, 4-H faculty member, said. "As a community, we've really pulled



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together, and we're hoping to see our 4-H membership rebound, as families normalize."

Because of damage to the Extension office, our faculty and staff worked out of the county library building, their cars, and temporary office spaces following the storm. Nearly all had to move out of their homes.

We also provided relief supplies to six local recovery centers and food banks including 2,500 lbs. of peanut butter, collected as part of the "Northwest Florida Peanut Butter Challenge," sponsored by the Florida Peanut Producers Association.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Marine/Coastal Program (Florida Sea Grant)

- A Rapid Assessment Coastal Community Damage Report with maps and linked photos was provided to NOAA economists in charge of Hurricane Michael "Fishery Disaster" funding.
- Collaborated with other Bay County departments to obtain the 140-foot El Dorado vessel scheduled for scrapping and instead have it deployed as an artificial reef. The May deployment critical as diving and charter fishing businesses looked for places to take customers interested in visiting Bay County despite hurricane damage to traditional artificial reef destinations.
- Collaborated with Bay County Planning and Zoning to deploy 28 reef modules, including nine super reefs. Walter Marine deployed the reefs in Bay County's NRDA Phase I project, located approximately 12 nautical miles southeast of the St. Andrew Pass. Each massive super reef weighs more than 36,000 pounds and is 15 feet tall. Multiple modules deployed in tandem provides equivalent tonnage and structure like a medium- to large-sized scuttled vessel.
- Engaged community volunteers in a partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to restore bay scallops in Northwest Florida. The goal of this project is to bring back bay scallops to their historic range throughout Florida. Each volunteer monitored at least one cage of 50 scallops, ensuring scallop health and reproduction success. In the past two years, an average of 60 volunteers participated in the program, maintaining about 5,000 scallops each year in St Andrew and St Joe bays.

Horticulture

- Partnered with the Landscape Inspectors Association of Florida Certified Arborists offering free digital assessments of trees beginning Oct. 25, 2018. The link was shared via social media, blog posts, and email.
- Produced a four-part landscape recovery series. Seminars reached more than 400 people. More than 100 attendees of "Part I" received at least one free tree donated by the Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA) which donated more than 200 trees. Gulf Coast State College Commodore Productions recorded and streamed the sessions on Facebook. Recordings are available online.
 - Part I: Trees
 - Part II: Shrubs and Screening Options
 - Part III: Groundcovers, Perennials, and Annuals
 - Part IV: Turfgrass Renovation and Establishment
- Master Gardeners, despite facing the same challenges as other citizens - displaced, lost homes, and increased stress - volunteered their time at plant clinics, programs at schools, the Sonders Community Garden, and a demonstration garden.
- The UF/IFAS Florida Medical Entomology Lab secured a donation from Summit Chemical for a pallet each of Mosquito Dunks and Bits larvicide. In coordination with Bay County Mosquito Control, the Horticulture agent assisted with larviciding and source reduction, talked with citizens about mosquito control, and distributed the product.

- The horticulture agent provided continuing education to pesticide applicators to ensure their required state certifications would remain current after Hurricane Michael. This timely class was conducted despite building disrepair.

4-H Youth Development

- Hurricane Michael gave us new opportunities to grow our program. After the hurricane, many 4-H sites were damaged. With the Extension Office also damaged, alternative meeting locations had to be established. New partnerships helped us fulfill the 4-H motto, "To make the best better!"
- Tyndall Bay Base, Tyndall Air Force Base, the, After School Assistance Program, and Southport Bay Base all had considerable damage.
- The Bay County Library partnered with us to deliver education programs. The library provided personnel, meeting space, and internet to have classes at their sites. We had "Crafter-Noon" programs after school until the school year ended in May.
- 4-H held sewing workshops, agriculture and leadership workshops, and provided hands-on activities for events at the library for youth.
- At NSA-PC, we used their internet immediately following the storm to get information out to others who had connectivity. They hosted our monthly leader trainings, youth tailgate workshop, and helped anytime we asked.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Florida Association of Extension 4-H Agents 4-H Military Partnership Award.
- National Association of Extension 4-H Agents Outstanding Poster - Grilling for scholarships: The Florida 4-H tailgate contest.
- National Association of Extension 4-H Agents 4-H Military Partnership Specialty Award.
- National Association of County Agriculture Agents (NACAA) Search for Excellence in Consumer Horticulture National finalist for Evidence-based Zoysiagrass Workshop (Horticulture team).
- National Association of County Agriculture Agents (NACAA) Search for Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture Recognition Program National finalist for Panhandle Fruit & Vegetable Conference (Horticulture team).
- Florida Association of County Agriculture Agents (FACAA) Communications. Personal Column - Extension Connection Celebrating Outdoors, Panama City News Herald column (Julie McConnell).
- Bay County Audubon Society Conservationist of the Year Award for outstanding conservation outreach following Hurricane Michael to UF/IFAS Bay County Master Gardeners under direction of Julie McConnell.
- Florida Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (FANREP) Innovative Program (Water Watch Program).



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



MARIA WESTFALL

Maria Westfall, Human Resources technician, rode out the hurricane with her son at his apartment because her husband is a police officer who was on duty and she would have been home alone when the hurricane hit. Because the roads were impassable and it was extremely dangerous to venture out, she waited until the next day to go home to check on her house. Upon arriving, Maria was devastated by the degree of damage. The roof had collapsed into her kitchen, two bedrooms and the living room were flooded, and multiple trees were down in the backyard, one of which fell on their large storage shed resulting in the loss of all the shed's contents. Her carport had also collapsed on her husband's new pickup truck causing extensive paint and body damage which has yet to be repaired.

For the first few weeks, Maria and her husband stayed with friends and family in different places and then stayed in a condo provided by the county for a little over a week before they decided to just return to their storm-damaged home and live there while repairs were being made. They lived in one bedroom without a kitchen for more than four months while the rest of their home was gutted and repaired.

Even though Maria's house was badly damaged, she considers herself one of the lucky ones because she and her husband were able to secure a contractor very early on and the work was completed by May, when many others had not even found a contractor by that point.

Today Maria is back in her home still dealing with residual items such as landscaping, fencing, and replacement of her carport and patio, but she is grateful that her life is getting back to normal.

WHO WE ARE

Our team is comprised of six professionals who are honored to serve the employees and citizens of Bay County by providing support and guidance concerning employment, benefits, retirement, and more. We accomplish this by continually refining our services, programs, and workplace environment in order to provide the highest caliber of workplace experience. We strive to make sure our organization is a reflection of our diverse community, valuing personal growth, fairness, and mutual respect. In doing so, we can continue to ensure success at every stage of employment and make Bay County a sought-after place to work.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Never before did the word "Human" in our title become as meaningful as when we began the long and difficult process of trying to help our employees and citizens recover from Hurricane Michael. After the storm, Human Resources was relocated to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) where we were present seven days a week. In addition to our regular duties, we took on the role of "timekeepers" where we were responsible for auditing forms that documented hours worked on specific duties related to Hurricane Michael so that these labor costs could be submitted to FEMA for reimbursement. We also helped coordinate and set up the Volunteer Recruitment Center in the Southport Community Building.

We coordinated temporary accommodations at condominiums in Panama City Beach for more than 70 employees whose homes were uninhabitable due to storm damage. We also gathered and communicated local disaster assistance resources to all county employees and designed and distributed a post-Hurricane Michael fact sheet for employees. In January, we completed a hurricane damage survey that aided in disbursing more than \$72,000 in donations to 93 employees.

We were also tasked with recruiting new employees to fill job vacancies caused by those who chose or were forced to leave Bay County after the hurricane, a daunting task due to the extreme labor shortage directly attributable to the storm. We held and attended job fairs, advertised positions, implemented referral incentives, and partnered with Gulf Coast Career Source using grant-funded workers to perform post-hurricane jobs at no cost to the county. Last fiscal year, 25 employees, or 4.1 percent of our workforce, left Bay County employment due to Hurricane Michael.

Training & Development

Employee training in the months immediately after Hurricane Michael was suspended so that every employee could concentrate on recovery efforts. The New Employee Academy resumed in February 2019. We will continue to strategically plan for our future employment needs as we maximize the effectiveness of our current employees, recognizing that training and development is essential to attracting and retaining a knowledgeable and skilled workforce.

We also provided other learning opportunities by hosting presentations, including:

- The Employee Life Cycle for supervisors
- Harassment and Workplace Violence for all employees
- How to Kick Start Your Nutrition
- How to lose Weight and Keep It Off
- How to Reverse Diabetes and Hypertension
- Ten Healthy Foods You are Likely Eating that You Never Should
- Exercise/Demonstration – Bodyweight Strength and Mobility
- Top 10 Do's and Don'ts of Nutrition

Technological Advances

Our Human Resources Information System (HRIS) team neared completion of a streamlined, interactive on-boarding process to welcome our new employees and better integrate them into the workplace. In addition, HRIS is beginning a data-conversion project with the same vendor to greatly improve our efficiency, reporting capabilities, and employee access.

Performance Management Program

Performance evaluations are an integral part of an organization's personnel management program. More than 568 performance evaluations were completed on county employees in FY 2018-19, with an above-average score of 3.48 out of 5.

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Wellness Initiative

For the 20th consecutive year, Human Resources, in conjunction with Florida Blue, provided an annual Health Fair for all employees. This is a free health screening provided by the health coaches from Florida Blue. The screening includes a blood test for cholesterol, diabetes, blood pressure, and BMI. In the past, there were many instances where these screenings revealed a serious medical condition and saved employees' lives, but thanks to repeated participation year after year we are no longer seeing this happen. In 2019, some 400 employees attended the health fair and gained valuable information about the status of their health.

Human Resources also coordinates blood pressure screenings three times a year in various locations throughout the county working with registered nurses from Bay Medical Sacred Heart.

This year we also rolled out a new wellness program called "Evolve With JT Workplace Wellness Initiative," an on-site personal nutrition, exercise, and coaching service free to employees and their spouses led by James Thompson, aka "JT," who is an outspoken fitness and nutrition expert and personal coach with more than 25 years of experience. With almost 200 people involved in one-on-one coaching (87 percent county employees and 13 percent spouses), Bay County employees have lost well over 2,000 pounds and 2,200 inches. Equally exciting is that more than 120 medications have been discontinued by employees through their doctors' recommendations and reports of improved sleep, increased energy, and overall better well-being are almost universal!

Giving Back to the Community

Human Resources coordinated three blood drives at three county locations. In 2018, Bay County employees donated 281 units of blood, all of which were used to help people in need locally. Each donation saves up to three lives, meaning that 843 patients could benefit from the lifesaving efforts of our employees' blood donations.

During Fiscal Year 2018-19, the Human Resources Department:

- Received 2,192 online applications and 142 paper applications
- Referred 1,787 candidates, rejected 412 applications
- On-boarded 107 new hires
- Participated in several job fairs throughout the community
- Processed 53 promotions, 95 resignations, four retirements, six probationary discharges, eight involuntary terminations, and 33 disciplinary actions
- Provided 15 learning and development training curriculums and 35 training sessions
- Trained 137 new employees, and all current employees received some type of training this fiscal year for a total of 2,090 training hours
- Processed 115 Family Medical Leave Act packets
- Attended or staged seven job fairs
- Managed multiple employee concerns
- Received and responded to numerous legal issues & public records requests

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Nine employees were recognized for 20 years of service with Bay County
- Four employees were recognized for 25 years of service with Bay County
- One employee was recognized for 30 years of service with Bay County
- Two employees were recognized for 35 years of service with Bay County



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



HEATHER OGILVIE

Outreach Librarian Heather Ogilvie prepared for Hurricane Michael by packing her car full of books, puzzles, and games, expecting to help with outreach following the storm, but not expecting the fallout to be quite as bad as it was.

"Seven trees fell on my house, the roof crumpled, and some of it blew away," Ogilvie said. "My little car full of books was crushed and broken."

During the first couple of weeks while camping in her neighborhood, Ogilvie said she did share the books and games, and everyone learned what it really means to be unplugged and get to know your neighbors. While the library was closed, she was assigned to help create the Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) in Southport, and connecting volunteers with opportunities was a perfect fit. A team from the library joined AmeriCorps, FEMA, Red Cross, and United Way to organize and support the mighty volunteer force that came from all over the country and beyond to help with rescue, debris removal, clean up, mold removal, and restoration. Later the VRC moved to the Bay County Public Library, where work was coordinated daily. The amazing resources and staff in the public library allowed staff to support individual recovery with computers, printing, faxing, legal help, and the latest information. Library staff connected people who needed help directly with the service organizations, she said, and eventually, virtually all the nonprofit organizations involved in recovery, FEMA, and the SBA, landed in the library, and the capability to make immediate connections was efficient and effective.



WHO WE ARE

The Northwest Regional Library System has seven locations in Bay, Gulf, and Liberty counties. Our headquarters are at the Bay County Public Library in Panama City. We serve 34,000 visitors each month who have access to more than 327,000 books, audiobooks, DVDs, e-books, downloadable audiobooks, magazines, and more. We offer public computers with internet access and Wi-Fi access in all locations. We also offer a variety of programming for all ages.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

- The Parker Public Library lost its roof during Hurricane Michael. The library was temporarily placed inside of a bookmobile donated from the Rotary Club of Chesterland, Ohio while the library underwent repairs. The Parker Public Library relocated back into the newly renovated building in August 2019.
- The Volunteer Recovery Center (VRC) was managed by several library staff members to register and match volunteers with Hurricane Michael relief effort projects. The VRC opened Oct. 29, 2018 at the Southport Community Center. The VRC relocated to the Bay County Public Library on Nov. 20, 2018, remaining active through early 2019.
- While the Bay County Public Library was closed, the library provided free donated books to the public. The carts of books were set up outside of the library for those waiting to go into the Disaster Recovery Center housed in the library meeting room. More than 4,500 books were distributed.
- Fines were waived for all lost, damaged, and late items due to Hurricane Michael.
- The Bay County Public Library provided free fax, print, and scanning services through January 2019 to help those filing forms for insurance, FEMA, Red Cross, and other disaster assistance.
- Preservation experts from the Heritage Emergency National Task Force (Smithsonian Institution and FEMA) provided a Saving Your Family Treasures workshop on March 19, 2019 to learn how to handle, dry, and clean damaged objects. We received positive response from the 37 individuals who attended the program.
- New partnerships were formed between the Bay County Public Library and the UF/IFAS Extension Bay County's 4-H program. The Extension office staff worked out of the library training room while their building was being repaired. The 4-H instructors taught a series of Beginner Sewing Classes and Crafternoons for Youth Services. They also provided library staff training on sewing machines.
- From October 2018 to August 2019, the Northwest Regional Library System provided 1,414 free public programs for all ages with a total of 22,754 attendees. The libraries recognized the importance of providing educational and entertainment opportunities for the public as soon after Hurricane Michael as possible to create normalcy and help relieve stress.

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AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- The Mobile Library Project, funded through a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant has been awarded to Northwest Regional Library System. The grant award is \$198,376. The Mobile Library will be used to expand library services to underserved areas in Bay, Gulf, and Liberty counties. The vehicle is scheduled to be completed by the end of May 2020.
- The St. Joe Community Foundation awarded a \$7,500 grant to replace hurricane-damaged furniture and books for the Parker Library.
- The Florida Library Association donated \$3,783, collected for Hurricane Michael recovery efforts to benefit Florida libraries, which was used to purchase replacement shelving for the Parker Public Library.
- A PLAN Innovation Project "Parker Library Children's Nook" was awarded to Library Director Robin Shader for \$4,868 to purchase a children's table, chairs, Lego sets, and books for the Parker Public Library renovations.
- A PLAN Innovation Project "Time to Talk: Strengthening Resilience through Community Engagement" was awarded to Bay County Public Library Outreach Librarian Heather Ogilvie for \$4,999 to purchase books for outreach and distribution, STEM activities, and other materials to help post-Hurricane Michael recovery in the community.
- A PLAN Innovation Project "Adult Technology Education Lab Upgrade" was awarded to library employee Gerard Giordano for \$4,655 to purchase a smartboard to better facilitate the adult computer classes. Scanners were also purchased for the public computer area and have proven helpful for those applying for disaster assistance.
- A PLAN Innovation Project "Stargazing at Your Library" was awarded to library employee Khelsea Rantanen for \$1,175 to purchase three telescopes. Khelsea is an official Solar System Ambassador and regularly schedules Sidewalk Stargazing classes to introduce the public to basic astronomy. Two telescopes are available for the public to borrow.
- A Pilcrow Foundation Disaster Relief Grant was awarded to the Charles Whitehead Public Library, Northwest Regional Library System, branch located in Wewahatchka. The grant provided \$800 in new, hardcover children's books from the Pilcrow Foundation.
- Gulf County Coordinator Nancy Brockman was a runner-up for the Penguin Random House Library Award for Innovation Through Adversity award and received \$1,000 in books published by Penguin Random House for Gulf County Public libraries.
- The St. Andrews Ukulele Orchestra's Gift of Music (December 2018) provided \$10,000 towards music education in the library. Projects have included a Beginner Guitar Class, Youth and Ukes Afterschool Ukulele Class, instruments for classes, and circulation.



HUMAN SERVICES

veterans services



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



MICHAEL BUTLER

Counselor Michael Butler, an eight-year employee with Bay County Veterans Services, like so many county employees and residents, suffered a catastrophic loss of his residence and lived out of a suitcase for seven months. Despite having to relocate and adjust to a new, nomadic lifestyle, Mike reported to work every day with no complaints, continuing to assist Veterans Services' clients in his usual, professional manner. Mike is well known throughout Bay County and a great asset to the office. He is married and has a son who is a recent graduate of the University of West Florida. Through the trying times over the past year, Veterans Services continues to support the veterans and families of Bay County with compassion, dedication, and professionalism that is second to none.

WHO WE ARE

Behind every Veterans' benefits claim is a veteran in need. The Bay County Veterans Services Office remains ready and willing to assist in obtaining those benefits. We provide dedicated service to all qualified veterans and their dependents, ensuring that they are provided fair and just treatment in accordance with the published laws and regulations governing the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our office assists veterans in applying for service-connected disabilities, obtaining non-service-connected pension benefits, healthcare eligibility, education benefits, life insurance, and VA home loan guaranty certificates of eligibility. Our office also helps veterans' family members with burial claims, widows' and widowers' benefits, and dependency claims.

Our office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. We average between 21 and 25 client visits daily. In between client visits, our staff will receive another 20 to 30 phone calls per day.

The Veterans Services staff consists of three counselors, one senior staff assistant, and one county veterans officer.

Our primary objective is customer service that may include: adding a spouse or a new baby to a veteran's award, requesting a veteran's eligibility to education, healthcare, or home loan, filing a service-connected disability claim, a pension claim, a widow's benefit claim, or even notifying the VA of a veteran's passing and burial. We assist veterans and their families from the cradle to the grave.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

All of our employees suffered, from minor damage to complete destruction of their homes, along with damage to our individual offices at the Bay County Government Center. Our staff assisted hundreds of veterans and their families in contacting the proper agencies to receive help while also coping with their own personal issues.

Our professional staff are no strangers to assisting veterans with PTSD, including anxiety and depression on a weekly basis. This knowledge has been invaluable in assisting clients, especially after the destruction that our communities suffered after the disaster.

For those veterans and family members unable to visit our office for an appointment, our counselors have met them at their residence, hospitals, assisted living facilities, or nursing homes to assist in applying for VA benefits.

We have assisted numerous homeless veterans throughout the area with benefit applications and referrals to VA Housing and Urban Development and Veteran Affairs support housing social workers.

Organizations and Events

- Assisted the Bay County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and the Bay County Veterans Council with the Memorial Day Ceremony at Kent Forest Lawn Cemetery in May with the largest audience ever.
- Represented the BOCC at the monthly meeting of the Bay County Veterans Council on the second Thursday of each month.
- Supported the veterans at the Sims Florida State Nursing Home through the 'Friends of Sims Nursing Home,' a nonprofit organization run by the County Veterans Service Officers of Northwest Florida. Funds are donated to this organization and distributed to the nursing home to purchase items that the state does not include in their budget.
- Served via the General Board of Directors for Career Source Gulf Coast.
- Sat on the Disadvantaged Transportation Board to assist local veterans.
- Assisted during the VA healthcare town hall meetings.
- Assisted veterans at two employment events sponsored by Gulf Coast Career Source.
- County Veterans Service Officer attended the Gulf Coast VA Mental Health Summit in Mobile, AL.
- Supported and assisted the annual Homeless Veterans Stand Down Sept. 26, 2019.

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information technology / geographic information systems

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

WHO WE ARE

The Information Technology Division provides reliable and stable infrastructure for telecommunications and data management. Maintaining all computers, video security systems, access control, mobile devices, and other electronic-related systems. IT also assists with the technical aspects of our various websites and assists others with reports and technical matters. IT is also responsible for network connectivity, software deployment, database creation and management, email services, and overall information security.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

The Information Technology Division was activated along with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the days prior to Hurricane Michael making landfall in the Florida Panhandle, causing widespread and major damage to the county's facilities and data infrastructure. Since that day, the Information Technology Division has focused on recovery and repairs to county infrastructure, while at the same time continuing daily support of county offices.

In 2019 our focus was on:

- Relocating county assets after buildings were damaged.
- Deployment of temporary cell phones supporting multiple agencies.
- Restoring internet to the EOC, Bay Sheriff's Office, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, and Tax Collector.
- Fiber optic restoration to more than 32 county sites down after Hurricane Michael.
- Helped other municipalities restore services after the storm, including Panama City, Panama City Beach Police Department, Parker, and Lynn Haven.
- Provided shelter support for the Red Cross, including an Internet café, wireless support, and identification badging.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

WHO WE ARE

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) is responsible for providing mapping services and products to internal county departments, the public, and a variety of other agencies. The GIS Division functions as a service-focused central resource of geographic information. We provide customer assistance, mapping, spatial analysis, data integration, application development, and deployment of content-specific web-mapping solutions to provide access to geographic data.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

The GIS Division deployed to the EOC for five weeks following the storm. GIS was responsible for creating hundreds of maps that were used by the search and rescue teams, National Guard, Forestry, Public Works for road clearing and traffic support operations, and other organizations that managed sheltering, points of distribution, feeding sites, base camps, disaster recovery sites, staging areas, boil water notices, detour maps, and much, much more.

GIS continues supporting recovery operations through products including:

- A pre- and post-storm imagery swipe app that allows users to view before and after satellite imagery from the storm.
- A final pass debris app that was used to inform the public of the debris pickup status on roadways throughout the county.
- A marine debris survey app used to inventory submerged marine debris related to the hurricane.
- A stormwater and natural channel clearing app was used to inventory stormwater and natural channels for debris clearing.

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



MIKE KLASSEN

When not hard at work as the administrator of the county's asset management system, Mike Klassen and his wife serve as youth pastors at their church, The Bridge, in Sunnyhills. Mike and his family regularly open their home to others and volunteer their time helping others in need.

After learning of a church in a neighboring city that was struggling with post-storm repairs, Mike and his family, along with members of their youth group, organized a cleanup and repair mission. They helped to clear trees, remove and salvage damaged contents, and bring much-needed encouragement.

Mike's past experience working in emergency response as a forester paid off for Bay County during our post-Hurricane Michael recovery efforts. His prior knowledge working as the GIS lead for several forest fire responses proved to be of great benefit to the GIS team. Being first to arrive at the Emergency Operations Center, Mike showed excellent leadership and initiative as he spearheaded the GIS response. He worked tirelessly while maintaining a very positive outlook throughout the GIS Division's five-week deployment to the EOC. During the course of the storm, Mike selflessly remained at the EOC, creating over 60 maps within the first three days in support of storm prep and recovery.

Immediately following the storm, he worked closely with the head of Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), providing maps to aid in the search for victims. USAR expressed their appreciation of Mike's work, stating that his work had reduced duplication of effort by search teams, thus allowing them to more quickly locate potential victims.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



KIMMY BROWN

Purchasing Specialist Kimmy Brown took refuge from the storm in her bedroom closet with her daughter, Hannah, and two cats, while her husband, WMBB news anchor Jerry Brown, reported on the storm at his station. After several hours, they left the closet to find their home in ruins, with water-soaked floors and huge holes that opened to the still-raining sky.

Kimmy says that once she arrived at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to help answer phones, she truly learned what teamwork was, exhibited not just by first responders, but the myriad volunteers and people from all over the country who came to help.

The front lobby of the EOC was chaotic and where Kimmy felt she could make the biggest difference welcoming and thanking each one and helping them connect with the appropriate team.

"Out of nowhere, thousands of people, ready for their assignments, ready to work had assembled. It felt like the most important thing that I had ever done," Kimmy said.

Kimmy and her family, like so many others, were forced to relocate while their home was being repaired.

"As we continue recovery from Michael, we can look back and see the selflessness of a majority of the employees and citizens of Bay County, Florida," she said. "I am blessed to be a part of this #850STRONG community."



WHO WE ARE

The Purchasing Department is staffed with four full-time employees charged with abiding by, upholding, and adhering to the county's Procurement Code and Procurement Manual to guard against the misuse or misinterpretation of those rules and regulations. Our staff has also become proficient in federal procurement requirements in order to comply with FEMA regulations to help the county recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Michael. The department promotes efficiency, economy, and fair and open competition in an effort to reduce the appearance and opportunity for favoritism or impropriety. We strive to inspire public confidence that purchase orders and contracts are awarded equitably and economically.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

As we all know, last year was an anomaly. The Purchasing Department was temporarily located at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for most of October while the Government Center was being repaired. It took all of our staff and many volunteers from different agencies throughout the United States to complete the amount of work required to begin recovery.

In a typical fiscal year, the Purchasing Department issues an average of 45 formal solicitations. As a result of damages to most of our facilities' infrastructure, the department processed 100 solicitations in FY2019, and 56 of those were a direct result of Hurricane Michael.

In Fiscal Year 2019, the Purchasing Department:

- Provided sales and customer support to county staff ordering goods and services through 811 requisitions valued at more than \$89.3 million, which is a vast difference from 2018 (\$48.6 million), largely due to recovery efforts. Total requisitions processed as a direct result of Hurricane Michael were 395, valued at \$57.2 million.
- Provided management oversight of the county purchasing card program with a purchase volume of \$2.47 million and realized an annual rebate of \$32,905. Authorized employees used the purchasing card to secure goods and services required immediately to begin recovery from Hurricane Michael. In most instances, this is the most efficient and effective way to make purchases after a disaster. Unfortunately, immediately after the storm many local companies did not have the ability to accept purchasing cards.
- Utilized online auction services and on-site surplus sales to dispose of obsolete equipment in order to maximize the county's investment through four auctions resulting in a return of \$43,256.
- Purchasing is responsible for maintaining the fuel yard located on 9th Street in Panama City. The fuel island was a complete loss. Purchasing Administrator Sheila Faries oversaw the complete rebuilding of the facility.

CONTACT US:

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WHO WE ARE

The Engineering Division is staffed with professional engineers, a licensed professional surveyor, surveying parties, engineering technicians, FDOT-certified inspectors, and administrative staff dedicated to providing quality surveying, transportation and stormwater engineering, and construction management for the citizens of Bay County.

Engineering aims to provide the citizens of Bay County with quality best-value engineering services in support of the construction, maintenance, and repair of Bay County's roads and stormwater management systems and capital improvement projects.

The Engineering Division is responsible for providing program management, design, permitting, inspection, and construction management services necessary to implement Public Works' transportation and stormwater programs. Additional responsibilities include improving the safety and efficiency of the county's transportation and stormwater systems; assisting Roads and Bridges in road maintenance; handling citizen inquiries; managing the Participating Paving Program (PPP); and managing the Adopt-a-Highway Program.

Engineering's priorities include:

- Assisting the Roads and Bridges Division as needed.
- Facilitating the Half-Cent Surtax Capital Improvement Program.
- Completing design of projects generated by Roads and Bridges work requests.
- Assisting other county departments.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Immediately after Hurricane Michael, the Engineering Division helped staff the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), implement the damage assessment plan to inspect bridges, beach outfalls, stormwater systems, and roadways and coordinated roadway clearing with municipalities, the National Guard, Forestry Service, and the county Roads & Bridges Division. This included clearing the majority of the county's 1,500 miles of roadways within seven days.

Many of the staff worked well outside of their normal duties by acting as flagmen, fuel depot guards, sign technicians, chainsaw operators, and logistics experts in order to feed the Public Works employees and Forestry Service employees.

As time passed, Engineering staff performed damage assessments to county guardrails, stormwater outfalls, pipe systems, canals, stormwater facilities, sidewalks, roadways, and waterway markers. This damage assessment identified the need to clean the stormwater basins clogged with storm debris. The Engineering Division managed the project to remove 1.5 million cubic yards of debris from the county stormwater/canal system over seven months.

Engineering is coordinating the removal of hazardous leaner trees from the county right-of-ways.

Engineering also implemented the following CIP projects during this period:

- Cowels Road Dirt Road Paving Project, FY 18
- Pavement Preservation Project, FY 18
- Annual Local Road Resurfacing Project
- Frankford Avenue Sidewalk and Resurfacing Project
- Merritt Brown Sidewalk Project, FY 19
- Local Dirt Road Paving, FY 19

All of this occurred while the Engineering Division was displaced from their offices due to damage from the storm.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



DONALD WERBACHER

Engineering Chief of Survey Operations Donald Werbacher, as a New Jersey native, had never experienced a real hurricane. He moved south to Mexico Beach shortly after 2004's Hurricane Ivan – a Category 3 storm that hit Pensacola, FL hard but still caused significant damage in Bay County. For Michael, Donald and his wife evacuated with their two dogs to Dothan, AL, but moved farther north to Montgomery, AL, where they rode out the storm. After it passed, they made their way back as far as a family member's home in Lynn Haven, and Donald reported back to work by Friday morning. He spent his time that first day back helping identify which roadways still needed clearing and pitched in to work clearing roadways in the days following.

When Donald and his wife finally made it back to their home in Mexico Beach, they found their hometown almost entirely swept away and their home still standing but completely unlivable. They lived in camper on their property for eight months during repairs to their home.

Donald said that he is glad he evacuated.

"Our neighbor rode it out and they were up in their attic," he said. "The house across the street picked up and floated into the one next to it. The house next to ours slid off the foundation and traveled 200 feet. Everyone I spoke to who stayed said they would never do that again – it wasn't worth their life for their possessions."

But, he said, a positive from the storm is that it bonded people together, particularly county employees.

"I thought we did an outstanding job; it was a team effort," he said.

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PUBLIC WORKS *facilities management*

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



JEFF GRINDLE

Facilities Maintenance Superintendent
Jeff Grindle suffered extensive damage to his own home during the hurricane, yet he was one of the first employees to arrive ready for duty the morning after the storm. Since then, Jeff has been a constant leader for his staff and has willingly devoted many overtime hours to ensure the job at hand was successfully completed, and he has played a key leadership role in Facilities Management's recovery efforts. Jeff has amazingly juggled the demands of executing the county recovery efforts, while simultaneously dealing with the added stress of having his home rebuilt.



WHO WE ARE

Bay County Facilities Management provides maintenance and support to the buildings and departments under the purview of the Bay County Board of County Commissioners, including custodial services, mail distribution, grounds maintenance, and the management of large building improvements and capital improvement projects. Facilities services 110 buildings/structures and 1.2 million square feet of buildings, including routine and preventative building maintenance, custodial services, project management, and grounds maintenance.

Facilities Management is dedicated to the enhancement of our customers' working environment while remaining good stewards of the facilities that serve Bay County citizens.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

On Oct. 10, 2018, Category 5 Hurricane Michael took aim at the Bay County community causing widespread and major damage to the county's administrative and support facilities. Since that day, the Facilities Management Division has been focused on recovery and repairs to county facility infrastructure while at the same time attempting to provide continuity of services for the community. The Facilities Management staff has spent countless hours assisting in this recovery effort, while also dealing with their own Hurricane Michael-related issues. Our staff has risen to the occasion and has been integral in helping other departments of the county serve the citizens.

The Facilities Management Division:

- Conducted initial assessments of all damaged buildings and began remediation efforts immediately to prevent further damage and losses.
- Ensured that the Bay County Courthouse and Bay County Government Center were operational within three weeks of the storm. Remediation work to these two facilities included the installation of more than 50,000 square feet of temporary roof systems as well as water extraction from ceilings, walls, and flooring.
- Coordinated efforts to maintain a suitable environment for the Bay County Jail to provide services to the community. This included the installation of a 260,000 square foot temporary roof system and a temporary HVAC system that serviced the entire facility.
- Coordinated remediation activities for 30-plus facilities that comprised over 500,000 square feet of space. These efforts included the installation of temporary roof systems, damaged building components, debris removal, and staff relocation into temporary locations.
- Initiated and managed indoor air quality testing at most compromised sites to ensure a safe working environment for county staff and the public.
- Procured repairs at an overall cost of about \$3 million and followed FEMA guidelines to ensure federal reimbursement.
- Initiated and managed 23 contracts to make permanent repairs to facilities in excess of \$16 million. All of this work conforms to purchasing procedures to ensure FEMA reimbursement.

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



COREY SANDERS

When Certified Mosquito Control Technician Corey Sanders left his home with his family on the day of the storm, they all thought the worst they would see was a Category 3 storm -- bad, but not unmanageable.

"Crazy how things changed," he said. "We stayed at Mosquito Control thinking this would be the safest place for me and my family."

Later, he realized things weren't looking good.

"As the storm came in we could see things like metal roofs and trash cans blowing away," he said. "Then it got really bad."

He said the metal garage doors at the building gave way and were crashing into the vehicles they were supposed to protect, and breaking everything they hit. The people in the building hid in the bathrooms and hallways from flying glass and insulation.

Finally, the storm passed, and Corey and his family couldn't leave until the next day because of debris-blocked roads. His home had sustained some damage, he found, and they grabbed a few things and left to stay with family out of town.

But Corey, like so many other county employees, reported back to work quickly, living in his damaged home without electricity and leaving his son out of town for more than a month while his wife stayed on the beach with her employer.

"It took a while, approximately seven weeks, until we were all together again, but it finally happened," he said.



WHO WE ARE

The Mosquito Control Division's priority is the prevention of mosquito-borne viruses. We are staffed by professional technicians certified in Public Health Pest Control, licensed through the Florida Department of Agriculture, to provide professional mosquito control services that protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Bay County. We have three main areas to our operation: identification, larvaciding, and adultciding.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Hurricane Michael hit Bay County Mosquito Control hard; we received damage to our facilities, trucks, and equipment. We could not trap mosquitoes ourselves; our traps were either damaged or missing. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services performed Bay County's initial trapping post storm, allowing the county to receive emergency aerial spraying and providing time to figure out what equipment was serviceable. Our initial ground spraying was concentrated to where emergency response points of distribution (PODS) were located, Mexico Beach, and on the main roads. Our Larvacide teams performed initial neighborhood sweeps, treating any standing water, emptying containers, and treating swimming pools. The Larvacide team received assistance from the South Walton Mosquito District.

The Mosquito Control building suffered damage to its roof, bay doors, structural damage to the rear of the building, and interior damage. The pole barn, fish-rearing house, two sheds, and the break area were a complete loss. We lost two vehicles, three ATV's with spray equipment, and all of our remaining trucks had some minor damages to them.

The pole barn, fish-rearing house, sheds, and break area all have been repaired. We have replaced two vehicles and two of the ATV's with spray equipment. The fish-rearing house and break area were repaired by employees.

We have replaced equipment with new Clarke Grizzly sprayers with SmartFlow Control System, Frontier Precision Mesa 2 Monitoring System, and a new desktop program ULV Office.

Adulticide Operation:

- Sprayed 16,323 miles
- Treated 593,566 acres

Larvaciding Operations:

- Answered 191 service requests
- Treated 586 catch basins
- Removed 1,320 waste tires
- Performed 2,592 inspections

Swimming Pools:

- Pre-Hurricane Michael pools treated with minnows, 50
- Post-Hurricane Michael pools treated with minnows, 167

Surveillance Operation:

- Deployed 1,624 traps
- Identified 15,210 mosquitoes

CONTACT US:

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PUBLIC WORKS

roads and bridges

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



JONATHAN KEIL

Bay County Roads and Bridges Construction Foreman Jonathan Keil rode out the storm in the Cove neighborhood of Panama City with his family. His wife, youngest son, and mother- and father-in-law weathered the storm well until about midway through when a tree fell on the home and ripped about a quarter of the roof off the top, he said.

Huddled together in an interior room, the family rode out the remainder of the storm, exiting to surveil the damage once the winds began to die down. Jonathan said that he, Panama City Mayor Greg Brudnicki, and two Bay County Sheriff's deputies cut their way out of the neighborhood, and he later zig-zagged his way north toward the Bay County Roads and Bridges yard off U.S. 231.

Hours later he finally made it to John Pitts Road, near the yard, and he and several co-workers were instructed to come back the following morning.

"I went back about a half an hour before the sun came up, parked as close as I could and walked in about two miles to get a piece of equipment," he said, "and I began working my way back out."

Over the next several weeks, Jonathan and his colleagues worked from sunup to sundown clearing roads.

"I was extremely proud of everyone I worked with," he said. "Everyone stepped up. The supervisors and crew leaders and everyone was doing what they had to do and doing their jobs and nobody complained."

It was a week after the storm before Jonathan saw his home - a trailer off Sherman Avenue that got knocked off its blocks, damaging many of his possessions. A few weeks later, the trailer caught fire, and everything inside was a total loss. For the next year, Jonathan and his family lived in the Cove with his wife's parents, eventually buying a new home in Millville.



WHO WE ARE

The Roads and Bridges Division is staffed by licensed construction operators and truck drivers, skilled craftsman, maintenance workers, customer service representatives, resource accountants, and program managers. Our mission is to provide efficient and high-quality operations and maintenance of county roads, bridges, and stormwater facilities.

The Roads and Bridges Division is responsible for the maintenance and repair work necessary to sustain the county transportation and stormwater infrastructure at an acceptable level of service. When possible, system improvements are made to enhance capacity, improve service, and protect the environment. Work is identified through route maintenance schedules, routine and special inspections, customer service work requests, state inspections, and regulatory requirements.

The division answers customer inquiries regarding the location and ownership of transportation right-of-way and stormwater drainage easements, and it also responds to commissioner inquiries and assists other governmental agencies when possible. The division manages the county residential driveway permit program which regulates the connection of residential properties to county roadways. The program provides the direction required providing for safe access connections to the county transportation network while maintaining roadside drainage systems.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

In Fiscal Year 2019, the Bay County Roads and Bridges Division was greatly impacted by the devastation from Hurricane Michael, ranging from buildings and equipment damage to complete closure of county roads and stormwater facilities. Recovery activities started minutes after the storm and are still in progress today.

- The division aided in the initial search and rescue push by removing storm debris from county roadways, ensuring a clear path for emergency personnel and citizens to navigate the disaster area. One of the division's first recovery efforts was to clear State Road 77 of debris to assist with the evacuation of Bay Medical Center.
- The division also helped establish disaster response sites for first responder recovery camps. This involved building roads, leveling sites, and removing storm debris from these critical areas.
- In 2019, the division received more than 11,000 requests for service, a substantial increase from 2,643 requests received in FY2018.
- The division worked to re-establish, maintain, and preserve the existing stormwater facilities that were damaged during the storm.
- The division also assisted in clearing FEMA trailer sites throughout the county. This greatly expedited the placement of families into safe living spaces.
- Established a program to remove illegally placed debris from county right-of-ways.
- Maintained and repaired Bay County's equipment fleet. In 2019, Roads and Bridges service technicians completed more than 2,100 repairs valued at approximately \$840,000.
- The division still managed to perform their regularly scheduled maintenance programs of grading roadways, cutting grass within right-of-ways, maintaining the county's bridges, cleaning stormwater systems, repairing roadways and the numerous other functions the division does daily.

CONTACT US:

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WHO WE ARE

The Traffic Engineering Division is staffed by licensed professional engineers, licensed/certified traffic signal technicians, certified fiber optic technicians, certified sign and striping technicians, and administrative, customer service, and accounting staff.

The Traffic Engineering Division is responsible for the design and maintenance of all traffic signs, striping, and signals in unincorporated Bay County. The division additionally maintains the traffic signals for every city in Bay County. In addition to signal maintenance, division staff provide engineering services for signal timing for all traffic signals within Bay County.

The division operates and maintains the county's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). This involves all ownership issues associated with approximately 100 miles of underground fiber optic cable, including design and modifications, daily locates under the Florida Sunshine One-Call Program, and repairs to the system when necessary. Other components of the ITS include 96 pan/tilt/zoom cameras, 23 travel time devices, five dynamic messaging signs, six portable variable message signs, and two remote weather stations.

The division manages the county Transportation Safety Grant Program. This includes writing grants, managing grant projects, and administration of reimbursement procedures. Traffic Engineering has been responsible for approximately \$80 million in grant money for different Bay County projects.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

- Completed safety repairs to more than 100 traffic signals post-Hurricane Michael to ensure the safe travel of citizens and emergency responders.
- Managed the reconstruction of more than 12 miles of fiber optic cable to quickly reestablish communications among government entities.
- Manually re-timed numerous traffic signals by hand to assist with the movement of citizens and emergency responders.
- Traffic sign technicians have replaced or repaired a signs that were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Michael.
- In conjunction with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), traffic signal technicians replaced more than 50 school flashers.
- Traffic engineering staff assisted the Geographic Information Systems Division in mapping the status of roadway and waterway clearing and traffic signal repairs.
- Assisted FDOT in major corridor traffic signal retiming efforts following Hurricane Michael to accommodate the new traffic patterns around the county.

CONTACT US:

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



MIKE JONES

Mike Jones is the fiber optic coordinator for the Traffic Engineering Division. Mike rode out the storm in town and was able to report to work the day after the hurricane. Hurricane Michael caused significant damage to the communications systems for the county, including multiple police departments. In conjunction with the IT department, Mike was able to reroute the county communications network to facilitate 911 communications to the Panama City Police and Panama City Beach Police. Once this was completed, Mike worked his way through numerous network devices restoring communications to various government organizations and traffic signals. Mike has made significant strides recovering personally and is still working to finalize repairs for the county.



PUBLIC WORKS

infrastructure surtax

Bay County has completed the following projects with funding from the surtax:

Resurfacing:

- North Lagoon Road with multi-use path
- Silver Lake Road
- Center Drive
- Camelia Street
- County Road 2302
- High Point Road
- Indian Bluff Road
- County Road 2300
- Resota Beach Road

Dirt Road Stabilization and Drainage Projects:

- Bertha Nelson Road
- Wendy Road

Bridge Repair and Replacement Projects:

- Deer Point Dam repair
- East Avenue bridge replacement design

Florida Department Of Environmental Protection Notice of Violation Projects:

- Webber Road
- Sorrel's Drive

Roadway Safety Projects:

- Laird Street sidewalks

In FY2019, Bay County continued working on the following projects with funding from the surtax:

Resurfacing:

- Thomas Drive

Dirt Road Paving and Drainage Projects:

- Cowells Road
- Veal Road

Intersection Improvement Projects:

- County Road 389 and State Road 77
- County Road 389 and U.S. 231

Bridge Repair and Replacement Projects:

- East Avenue Bridge replacement
- County Road 2297 Bridge replacement

Florida Department Of Environmental Protection Notice of Violation Projects:

- West Linger Longer Road

Capacity Improvement Projects:

- Jenks Avenue widening
- County Road 2321 to State Road 390 connector road
- Moylan Road at Panama City Beach Parkway

Roadway Safety Projects:

- Frankford Avenue resurfacing and sidewalk
- County Road 30 Front Beach Road design
- Magnolia Beach Road sidewalk
- Merritt Brown Middle School sidewalk



ABOUT THE INFRASTRUCTURE SURTAX

Voters approved the Bay County Half-Cent Infrastructure Surtax in 2016 by a margin of greater than 10 percent, with the funding aimed at improving area roadways and infrastructure. Collection of the sales tax began in early 2017. In both 2018 and 2019, Bay County collected \$12.5 million each year and was able to leverage that funding for grants and partnerships that nearly doubled the county's annual surtax revenues each year, respectively.

The tax is for use exclusively in Bay County to repair local roads, increase neighborhood safety through pedestrian paths and sidewalks to schools, reduce neighborhood flooding, and reduce traffic congestion. The sales tax is estimated to generate roughly \$21 million annually, to be split between the county and its cities by a formula based on population. For Bay County, that means more than \$12 million in revenue each year that must be spent on the roughly \$127 million in needed roadway and infrastructure improvements, as mandated by the ballot language. As an added layer of protection to ensure the money is spent wisely, a citizens' oversight committee was empaneled and meets regularly to check the county's progress.

Recovery efforts from Hurricane Michael slowed some of the capital improvement projects on the east side of the county; however, county staff is working to leverage federal dollars toward the improvements.

The passage of the tax allowed the Bay County Commission to make good on a promise they made to cut the millage rate in 2017 to offset deductions from the general fund that were being used to supplement road paving, bridge upkeep, and road maintenance. That reduction continued in 2018 and again in 2019.

And meanwhile, the increased revenues have allowed the county to begin to address a \$57.4 million backlog in needed road resurfacing as well embark on other infrastructure improvements, including bridge replacements, intersection improvement projects, dirt road stabilization, capacity and stormwater improvements, roadway safety, and more. The dollars raised by the sales tax must be spent inside Bay County on local projects. Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. have no say on how or where the money is spent; however, the availability of funding may make grant applications that require matching funds more competitive.

The sales tax is levied on eligible goods with a value of up to the first \$5,000 of value – the tax is capped at \$25 per item.

CONTACT US:

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WHO WE ARE

The Risk Management Division works to ensure the safety of the citizens and employees of Bay County through safety training and loss-prevention consulting to all county departments. It is the responsibility of this department to produce and implement programs providing a safe work environment. Another important obligation is to provide, maintain, and supervise the implementation of property and liability insurance for county assets. Risk Management also oversees the county's successful Self-Insured Workers' Compensation Program for approximately 1,000 county employees, including three constitutional offices. Risk Management tracks, maintains, and files required reports pertaining to the whereabouts and amounts of mandated hazardous materials throughout Bay County facilities. Other notable tasks include managing a mandatory drug-free work environment, formulating partnerships with outside organizations such as the North Florida Safety Council, implementing programs such as the 24/7 Healthiest-You Tele-Doc Program, and coordinating the American Disabilities Act (ADA) plan with other Bay County departments.

Risk works to protect the assets, health, and well-being of the Bay County Commission, three constitutional offices, employees, taxpayers, and the citizens of Bay County and is dedicated to providing the best products, safest environment, and diligent service to the employees and citizens of Bay County.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

As with everyone else in Bay County, both our personal and our workplace priorities changed overnight. The scale of damage and ensuing claims due to Hurricane Michael brought many new challenges to the Risk Management team. In 2019 we:

- Provided round-the-clock coverage at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with a staff of five during Hurricane Michael's landfall and in the weeks that followed until cleared to return to normal location and hours of operation.
- At the EOC, compiled and maintained information with temporary phone numbers and temporary addresses of local physicians and medical facilities as they relocated and reopened.
- At the EOC, we established and maintained contact with each of our worker's compensation-injured employees to assist in any way that we could.
- Assessed more than 130 county properties for damage from Hurricane Michael with the county's insurance adjusters.
- Processed thousands of invoices, purchase requisitions, purchase orders, contracts, and change orders for Bay County's Hurricane Michael claims.
- Worked with the county's insurance broker and adjusters to recoup an estimated \$45 to \$50 million in insurance proceeds for county property repairs of damage caused by Hurricane Michael.
- Worked closely with contracted FEMA specialists and government officials to facilitate insurance and FEMA proceeds.

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



EVE TOOLEY

Eve Tooley, director of Risk Management, came to work for Bay County in 2007, bringing with her invaluable experience from 30-plus years in the insurance industry. Being the eldest daughter in a very large military family, Eve became an expert at balancing many duties at a very early age. As a mother to two children, Anna and Matthew, who have blessed her with four adorable grandchildren, she loves spending time with her family. She enjoys rides through the woods with her husband, Jim, and eating fried mullet backs with hush puppies and local honey. She loves antiquing and being in the kitchen, never shying away from cooking for large gatherings, such as family reunions or church homecomings. She is famous in the county for her fabulous bread pudding. She is a behind-the-scenes supporter of local charities and non-profit organizations and would absolutely give the shirt off her back to anyone in need. She also has a wonderful gift of providing guidance to those who are searching for answers, be it on a personal basis or a professional one. Most days, you can find Eve in her office working after hours on the many tasks that she handles for the county. She is not an 8 to 5'er, but a dedicated 24/7 employee who is one of the few county employees reachable by phone at any time, whether it be to take a property damage report or provide guidance when an injury has occurred. She is a fearless leader who handles life with grace, honesty, tirelessness, fierceness, and dignity. Those traits have been particularly useful during this last year, handling the claims of Hurricane Michael. The county is extremely lucky that someone with her incredible knowledge and expertise decided to provide these gifts for the betterment of Bay County and its citizens.

UTILITY SERVICES

water and wastewater

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



SEAN LATHROP

When Chief Water Treatment Operator Sean Lathrop arrived at work on Oct. 9, he knew that, as a Tier 1 county employee, he and his colleagues were at the water treatment plant for the duration. At that time, he said, he felt comfortable that his wife and five-year-old daughter were safe at his mother-in-law's home in Forest Park. That feeling didn't last.

The Utilities Department had battened down what they could in preparation for the storm earlier in the week. At midday on Wednesday, the situation really began to deteriorate. Sean said he and his coworkers moved to the bottom floor of their building, and shortly after the roof began to rip apart. Around 12:30 p.m., he said, he was forced to make the difficult decision of shutting down the high service pumps, which meant that water would be shut off to the entire county.

Once the storm cleared, Sean could only think about reaching his family, as the water treatment plant was so badly damaged, he feared what he would find when he finally got to them. He made it home to find them safe, but then quickly returned to work, taking up residence there for many days.

Within a week, Bay County was able to provide potable water to the systems that could receive it.

"The Utilities Department really came together throughout this challenging time, and we have some of the best, most dedicated staff in the county," Sean said. "To say that I work with a dedicated team is an understatement. The many hours, hard work and determination from everyone has helped the water plant get to where we are today."



WHO WE ARE

For more than 50 years, Bay County Utility Services has provided our community with reliable, economical, and high-quality water and wastewater services in a courteous manner. We employ highly trained people and use state-of-the-art equipment while continuing to set industry standards as they relate to procedures, methods, and customer service. Bay County Utility Services is committed to high-level customer satisfaction and is always looking for ways to streamline processes to reduce redundancy and expense. Our customers can be assured they receive the most cost-effective service to reduce water losses while conserving one of the world's most precious resources.

The Utility Services Department employs more than 80 workers who make up the Water, Wastewater, and Utility Permitting divisions, along with laboratory and administrative staff dedicated to providing quality water and wastewater services. The Water Division treats and distributes drinking water to the local municipalities, Tyndall Air Force Base, and the county's retail customers in the unincorporated area. The Water Division also provides untreated raw water for local industry use in their cooling processes. Utility Services owns and operates a 60 million gallons-per-day capacity water treatment plant, two raw water pumping stations, six water booster stations, 391 miles of retail infrastructure and 194 miles of wholesale infrastructure.

The Wastewater Division provides wastewater treatment services to unincorporated Bay County and the cities of Callaway, Parker, Springfield, Mexico Beach, and Tyndall Air Force Base. Utility Services operates two wastewater treatment plants strategically located throughout the county to provide sewer services to residents. The Wastewater Division also manages the Bay County Environmental Laboratory, which provides short hold-time analysis for Water and Wastewater.

The Permitting Division facilitates the review and processing of plans and permits for the Utility Services Department, which includes water and wastewater construction contract assistance and bid preparation. The Permitting Division performs construction site inspections and project management and performs water and wastewater utility locates for public and private development and construction.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

- Operating and maintaining Bay County's water and wastewater systems is a round-the-clock operation. During Hurricane Michael, Utilities maintained a full staff of onsite water and wastewater operators, maintenance technicians, instrument and electrical technicians, and water distribution and wastewater collection technicians to ensure that utility services were maintained and restored as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- As Hurricane Michael ripped through Bay County, its effects devastated the county's water and wastewater systems. With the loss of commercial power, cellular and radio communication down, roads blocked or congested by debris and downed power lines, and most of the buildings and controls significantly damaged, the Utilities team was faced with tremendous obstacles to restore water and wastewater services to the citizens of Bay County.

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-5010 | utilityservices@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

UTILITY SERVICES water and wastewater



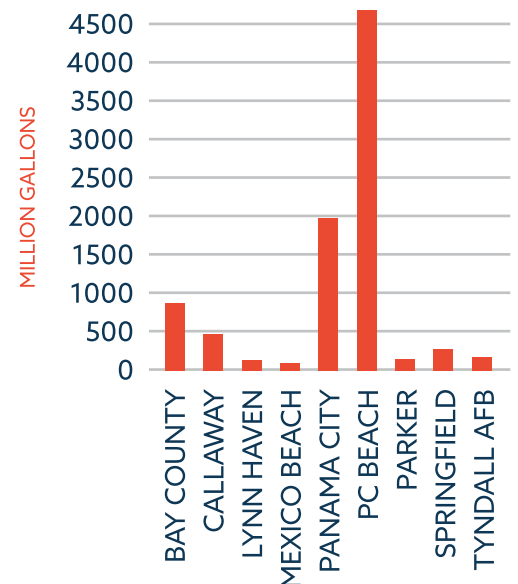
- As the wholesale drinking water supplier to all municipalities in Bay County, Utilities was the first step in the critical path. Utilities immediately reached out to FlaWARN, a mutual aid network of utilities developed to assist each other in times of need. With assistance from other utilities, including South Walton Utilities, Jacksonville and Orlando, water service was reestablished to all cities within seven days. All county wholesale and retail boil water notices were rescinded within 11 days.
- Utility Services is the operator and co-owner of the Military Point Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility (MPAWTF) located on Tyndall Air Force Base, where the eye of the storm hit. Despite the immense damage to the buildings and electrical systems of the plant, the team was able to immediately take flow and manually re-establish treatment within 10 days, allowing unincorporated Bay County and the cities of Callaway, Parker, Springfield, Mexico Beach, and Tyndall AFB to continuously pump and process wastewater.
- Utilities immediately engaged a utility consultant to perform a Post-Storm Assessment and Recovery Plan to assess and document damages to facilities and infrastructure and to provide a fiscal and criticality based path forward for repairs. Damages to the Water Treatment Plant, wastewater treatment plants, pump and booster stations, lift stations, and infrastructure are estimated at more than \$50 million.
- One of the most important lessons learned from Hurricane Michael is redundancy and hardening. While the immediate need is to replace the damaged equipment and infrastructure to maintain operations, Utilities is analyzing and implementing necessary upgrades and hardening to mitigate impacts from future events.
- Prior to Hurricane Michael, Utility Services had approximately 6,671 retail customer accounts. The number of accounts dipped to a low of 6,143 accounts in March and rebounded to 6,599 in September 2019.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Utility Services won the following awards:

- 2018 AWWA National Historic Water Landmark Award – Bay County Water Treatment Plant
- 2018 FSAWWA Florida Historic Water Landmark Award – Bay County Water Treatment Plant
- 2018 FDEP Plant Operations Excellence Award – Bay County Water Treatment Plant
- 2018 AWWA Outstanding Water Distribution System – Bay County Water System
- 2018 Earle P. Phelps Award – Honorable Mention - Military Point Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility
- 2018 Earle P. Phelps Award – Runner Up – North Bay Wastewater Treatment Facility

2019 DRINKING WATER CONSUMPTION



	2018	2019
PANAMA CITY	2031	1989
PANAMA CITY BEACH	4604	4693
SPRINGFIELD	304	347
PARKER	135	119
CALLAWAY	561	460
LYNN HAVEN	179	155
MEXICO BEACH	140	99
TAFB	243	160
BAY COUNTY	766	780

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



LAMAR HOBBS

Lamar Hobbs is the operations coordinator for the Transit Department. Lamar was one of two employees who reported to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) days before Hurricane Michael made landfall. He had to leave his pregnant wife, who was in her last trimester, at home, with their 10-year-old son, to ride out the storm alone. This was considered a high-risk pregnancy, as Lamar's wife expected twins. And though Lamar knew that reporting to the EOC was part of his duties as operations coordinator, he never thought he would be in a situation like this. He rode out the storm with the Transit program administrator, helping coordinate countless evacuations of Bay County residents in need of transit before and after the storm. He was in charge of preparing the transit yard and fleet prior to landfall, and he conducted himself professionally, placing the citizens of the community above his own personal worries. Immediately following the hurricane, Lamar went to check on his family and their home, but soon realized that they sustained damage and had no utilities. Worried his wife might go into labor early, he had his wife evacuate with their son to temporarily live with family outside the area.

Lamar stayed behind to continue his duties at the EOC, helping to organize the response and recovery of the transit system. Happily, Lamar and his wife had twin boys in February of 2019 while picking up the pieces to their personal lives. Lamar continued to work for the citizens of Bay County during recovery, though he did get to take some well-deserved time off to be with his family during the few weeks following his twin's birth.



WHO WE ARE

The Transit Division oversees two transit programs within Bay County. On behalf of the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), we oversee Bay Town Trolley (BTT), the fixed-route system. The TPO owns the system and includes representation from all the municipalities and Bay County. We also oversee the demand-response system, Bay Area Transportation (BAT) on behalf of the Bay County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) who serve as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC).

Our division's main focus is to keep the system in compliance with The Florida Department of Transportation and Federal Transit Administration guidelines. We manage the contracted operator, so the riders of both systems have clean, efficient, and safe modes of transportation.

The Transit Division maintains and seeks grants, creates budgets, purchases capital items, maintains inventory, and provides marketing.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Prior to Hurricane Michael, Transit evacuated over 300 people, and their pets, to shelters and assisted in the evacuation of nursing home and assisted living facilities. In response to the hurricane, transit worked closely with Emergency Services to take patients to dialysis and picked up patients that were discharged from area hospitals. In addition to bringing the normal routes back online, new routes were created to service shelters and demand response clients; we took riders to drop-off locations to obtain supplies, and we continued to run normal routes within the community.

Almost every Transit vehicle had some type of Hurricane Michael damage. Over the last year, three buses were overhauled and fixed due to the damage. This process is very time consuming, considering each vehicle has to be sent out of town for repair. Other minor repairs on the Transit fleet have been made locally as well.

The Transit system had almost all of its 300 bus stops impacted by Hurricane Michael with debris blocking the stops, bent signs, missing signs, and destroyed shelters and benches. Immediately following the storm, all Transit stops were inventoried and cleaned and cleared of debris in order to make them usable and safe. New signs and transit amenities were installed.

Both Transit buildings, including the maintenance area, were significantly damaged. Staff worked quickly to secure temporary facilities to operate. The maintenance facility was repaired enough to allow maintenance staff to work on Transit vehicles to keep the fleet running so there would not be a lapse in service.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- First Place to Bay Town Trolley by Florida Public Transportation Association for the brand new, real-time tracker application.
- Received the very first Emerald Award from Emerald Coast Regional Planning Council for the work performed before, during, and after Hurricane Michael.
- 2018 Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year. This award was given in 2019 from the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged for the efforts and transit trips performed before, during, and after Hurricane Michael.

CONTACT US:

Bay Town Trolley | (850) 769-0557 | info@baytowntrolley.org
Bay Area Transportation | (850) 785-0808
Transit 8161 Administration | (850) 248-8161
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

The Bay County Economic Development Alliance (BayEDA) is Bay County's economic development entity. Publicly and privately funded, BayEDA serves Bay County in supporting existing businesses and recruiting new businesses. BayEDA supports the existing pillars of the economy and is dedicated to growing and diversifying the Bay County economy. BayEDA presents the positive points of Bay County to businesses, industry, and professional leaders in their decision-making process for capital investment and job creation. Whether someone is looking to start, expand, or relocate their business, BayEDA has the tools, resources, and support available to make an informed and smart decision to ensure success in Bay County.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

Following the storm, our primary mission as the economic development entity for Bay County was working with our existing industries and getting them operational. This mission was paramount to ensure our local economy withstood the impacts of Hurricane Michael. In the days and weeks that followed, we witnessed amazing resolve from our citizens, local leaders, and businesses. Our community banded together to ensure needs were met and that our community started on an immediate recovery process.

Following Hurricane Michael, we anticipated a slow-down in visiting prospects for economic development projects; however, what we experienced was anything but that. Within two weeks we continued hosting prospective companies weekly, and this prospect activity was steady throughout 2019.

Two economic development announcements highlighted 2019, and more are anticipated for early 2020.

Casa Laxmi Foundation

In early 2019, the Casa Laxmi Foundation closed on approximately 250 acres in northern Bay County for the development of an international boarding school. This multi-million dollar development is well under way, and local architects are completing the design and planning phases.

Clark and Son

In October 2019, a world leader in kitchen cabinet design, manufacturing, and distribution, selected Bay County for their distribution and logistics headquarters. Clark and Son, Inc. will invest \$5 million, create approximately 50 well-paying jobs, and will add significant container traffic through Port Panama City.



CONTACT US:

(850) 215-9965 | 5230 West Highway 98, Panama City, Florida 32401
www.bayeda.com



COME CELEBRATE
our
RECOVERY



WE'LL BE
together
SOON



We're ready to
RISE and
SHINE

WHO WE ARE

Nestled along beautiful St. Andrews Bay in Northwest Florida, Panama City offers an exciting balance of culinary experiences, outdoor activities, and cultural encounters, while radiating a laid-back feel. It's this unique combination that makes Panama City an irresistible destination for individuals, couples, and families. With multiple historic neighborhoods and its own oyster trail, there's always something to see or do in Panama City. As the largest city in Bay County, Panama City serves as the county seat. While other areas of the county have had tourist development taxing districts for many decades, the Panama City tourist development taxing district was established in 2014 with collections beginning in January of 2015. Destination Panama City (Panama City Community Development Council, Inc.) is the official tourism agency for the City of Panama City, Florida and is funded by the 5-percent tourist development tax applied to short-term, overnight accommodation rentals in Panama City. From 2015-2018, the tourist development tax revenue generated from this district was about \$1.5 million per year. The economic impact of tourism for this district during the same period was more than \$90 million annually. One year post hurricane, about 60 percent of the short-term rental units are back online, and the remaining units continue their renovation and rebuilding efforts.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

As the official tourism agency responsible for the promotion and marketing of Panama City, 2019 was an especially unique and challenging year. Just 10 days into the fiscal year, Hurricane Michael changed the face of the community. In the days and weeks immediately following the storm, the Destination Panama City team shifted gears to help with local communication, immediate food and necessities distribution, and eventually sifting through the contents of the former Visitors Center, which also incurred heavy damage.

Postcards from Panama City – With significantly reduced lodging inventory, no electricity, and millions of cubic yards of debris to be removed, Panama City was not ready to move forward with the traditional post-storm campaign of “We Are Open.” Understanding the needs of the residents and the amount of work ahead, a campaign was created involving a series of postcards (digital and print) that would document the city's journey while it was rebuilding. The intention was to keep the lines of communication between our most loyal visitors, to continue to grow the reach of Destination Panama City, and most importantly, to highlight the spirit, resiliency, and character of the city.

Future Visitors Center – The original Visitors Center, located at the historic St. Andrews Bank, was heavily damaged during the storm. Staff worked remotely until a temporary construction trailer was secured and ultimately transitioned into a smaller rental space on Harrison Avenue. Throughout the year, Destination Panama City has worked with the City of Panama City on plans to build a new Visitors Center that would enhance a current kayak launch and provide a public meeting room for gatherings and sailing regattas. Construction on this facility is expected to begin in the summer of 2020.

Public Relations

Through targeted pitching and purposeful press releases, more than 100 million media impressions were earned in 2018. Some highlights of the public relations efforts include:

- Bringing Hope After Hurricane Michael, One Sign at a Time – Southern Living, Nov. 9, 2018
- New Civil Rights Sites – The Group Travel Leader
- There is more to historic Panama City than the beaches – Albany Herald, Aug. 13, 2019
- 18 Glorious Ways to Enjoy Oysters on National Oyster Day – Aug. 1, 2019
- The Premier Woodstock 50 – 130-plus news, cultural, and tourism-related industry media outlets, generating over 58 million impressions worldwide

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Awarded a VISIT FLORIDA grant for Postcards from Panama City campaign
- The Postcards from Panama City campaign won a VISIT FLORIDA Flagler Award in the Direct Marketing category
- Awarded Florida Humanities Council grant for Historic Downtown Panama City Walking Tour.
- Earned a spot on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail for the Bay County Courthouse in Downtown Panama City as the original site of Gideon vs. Wainwright (landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that upheld the 6th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution)

CONTACT US:

(850) 215-1700 | 228 Harrison Avenue, Panama City, Florida 32401
www.destinationpanamacity.com

panama city beach tourist development council

WHO WE ARE

The Bay County Tourist Development Council (TDC) and Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) are responsible for marketing Panama City Beach as a year-round tourist destination, funded through a 5-percent tourist development tax applied to short-term, overnight accommodation rentals in Panama City Beach, which equals about 18 million visitor days/nights each year. The tax also pays for beach renourishment, cleaning, and maintenance efforts. For more information on Bay County Tourism, visit www.VisitPanamaCityBeach.com.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

As Visit Panama City Beach was preparing to launch its annual advertising campaign in October 2018, Bay County was ravaged by Hurricane Michael, and messaging had to be redirected to address perceptions of the recovery in Panama City Beach.

Marketing & Media 2019

Post Hurricane Michael marketing:

Thanksgiving turned out to be the perfect time to launch a new campaign. The message was one of thankfulness on behalf of the community and touched on the very human feelings of gratefulness for the beach being spared from the worst of Hurricane Michael. With the message delivered through social media channels, Visit Panama City Beach was immediately able to see the tremendous response as the destination's community came together.

Phase Two gave Visit Panama City Beach the opportunity to make the people most affected by the storm the stars of the campaign. Stories were collected of locals, small business owners, and loyal visitors who consider Panama City Beach their favorite destination and pushed out in channels that saw the best engagement -- Facebook and Instagram. To continue the momentum for the third phase, Visit Panama City Beach launched a contest soliciting user-generated content by asking people "How Do You PCB?" Fans were encouraged to share their stories, images, and best memories. Paid social media on Instagram and Snapchat stories increased awareness of the user-generated content people submitted. Every piece of engagement brought home the message that a person's best memories of Panama City Beach could win them a trip to the beach.

Visit Panama City Beach amplified engagement by urging fans to vote for their favorite submissions and gave each nominee destination-branded creative using their own imagery. Visit Panama City Beach's audience began engaging with their own networks, providing exposure beyond just the destination. The nominee with the most votes from each vacation segment-Family/Beach, Romance, Eco-Adventure and Adrenaline- won a vacation package to Panama City Beach. Using a different social media approach and being sensitive to the area's recovery, Visit Panama City Beach redirected the conversation away from the hurricane to warm memories that promoted a positive perception of the destination and intent to travel.

As we turned the corner in spring we introduced the evolution of our Make It Yours brand campaign with refreshed creative and implemented our full media plan.

2019 INITIATIVES

- **Chasin' the Sun** - In 2019, Visit Panama City Beach announced the fifth season of the award-winning "Chasin' the Sun," fishing show on Discovery Channel's new outdoor programming.
- **UNwineD March 2019** - Specific to 2019, UNwineD aimed to change visitors' perceptions of the destination's recovery just five months after Hurricane Michael devastated its neighbors in Panama City and Mexico Beach. Bay County's unsung heroes who worked tirelessly day and night at the Emergency Operations Center during Hurricane Michael were also honored with a special ceremony Friday evening. For every UNwineD ticket sold, a portion of the proceeds went to the United Way of Northwest Florida and the World Central Kitchen to benefit surrounding communities.
- **Panama City Beach Sports Complex Opened Summer 2019** - The park is a public-private partnership with the Panama City Beach CVB, St. Joe Company, and Bay County and features nine turf fields, four natural grass fields, dedicated tournament buildings, two championship fields with seating up to 1,500 and over 1,000 parking spots. The complex's flexible design will allow for soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football, baseball, softball and much more.

CONTACT US:

(850) 233-5070 | info@visitpanamacitybeach.com
www.visitpanamacitybeach.com



2019 STATS:

- 792,000 Facebook likes
- 53,200 Instagram followers
- 53,200 Twitter followers
- 1.2 million YouTube views
- 7.1 million website visits
- 240,280 unique listeners stream The Real Fun Beach Pandora Station
- 28 trade shows attended





WHO WE ARE

As Bay County's smallest city, Mexico Beach is less than five miles long; however, there is an abundance of activity in our little corner of Bay County. An unconventional beach destination, Mexico Beach provides unique adventures tailored toward an easy-going vibe for visitors and residents year round.

The Mexico Beach Community Development Council (MBCDC) is distinctly purposed to promote and advertise the Mexico Beach area, its attractions, and accommodations in a manner that will draw tourists. Funding comes directly from the five-percent tourist development tax applied to short-term, overnight lodging in Mexico Beach. The MBCDC is able to continuously mature its marketing operations as well as assist in beach nourishment, canal, and park enhancements and community event support.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

We survived...

Mexico Beach was nearly decimated by Hurricane Michael; however, that did not stop the MBCDC from getting to work on telling visitors and media that we were immediately moving forward and restore what was destroyed. The MBCDC Board of Directors called its first post-storm meeting on Oct. 26 with the direction to let those who visit or were planning to visit know the next steps for our beaches and area businesses. The messaging that was conveyed through various media outlets was branded with #rebuildingwithlove and #lovemexicobeach. A "Rebuilding with Love" campaign was created and highlighted business owners and told their stories of perseverance and resilience.

Ninety-five percent of the MBCDC tax revenue, which is comprised of short-term lodging tax, was destroyed. However, that remaining 5 percent continued to collect, and while the numbers for 2019 were significantly down, every month since the hurricane resulted in some revenue collections. The lodging inventory continues to increase with single-family homes, town homes, recreational vehicle parks, and condos available to those looking for a place to stay.

The MBCDC continues to move forward and promote that the beaches are open as well as a handful of eateries and shops. We welcome guests to revisit our area and continue to support our recovery efforts by staying, shopping, and dining at our businesses. The MBCDC also re-opened the Welcome Center in a temporary structure fewer than two months after the storm. The Welcome Center is open five days a week and offers area brochures and maps as well as area information, so be sure to visit.

The beaches received an emergency beach berm project as well as thousands of new sea oats being planted along the dune lines. Boardwalks and walkovers have been rebuilt, and the city sidewalk that stretched the length of town has been restored. A beach restoration project is in the works that will restore the critically eroded area as well as the entire beach. At the year's end the project was in the final phase of design and permitting. The MBCDC is working with various outlets, including the Bay County TDC, to fund this project.



CONTACT US:

850-648-8196 | 102 Canal Parkway, Mexico Beach, FL 32456
www.mexicobeach.com



WHO WE ARE

In July 2012, the federal RESTORE Act (Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act) established a trust fund from administrative and civil penalties related to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Five "pots" of funds were set up in the federal trust fund.

A portion of funds from Pot 1 and Pot 3 are reserved for Bay County. Settlement payments will be made into the trust fund over a number of years, and will gradually be available to the county. The county's share of Pot 1 will be approximately \$42 million over 15 years. Pot 3 will provide about \$11 million. The county will also pursue matching funds. The money can be used to restore and protect the natural resources and economy of the Gulf Coast region.

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners decides which eligible projects to fund. Based on recommendations from a citizens advisory committee, the board selected projects for the first funds available from Pot 1, the Direct Component, and for all funds that will be available from Pot 3, the Spill Impact Component. A grant application must be submitted for each project.

Projects funded from Pot 1 include replacing the dilapidated dock at the AMIkids/Panama City Marine Institute. The dock is used as a launching site for restoration projects for the St. Andrew Bay system. Natural resource agencies also use the dock.

Pot 1 is also funding an update to the county's stormwater master plan, last updated in the 1990s. The plan will be used to prioritize stormwater management and treatment for the bay system.

Access to St. Andrew Bay and the Gulf is being improved by a City of Lynn Haven project at Porter Park and improvements to Carl Gray Park by the City of Panama City. The county is building new artificial reefs to be enjoyed by locals and tourists.

Pot 3 funds will be used for two programs to improve the water quality of St. Andrew Bay. One program will focus on North Bay and the other on bay stormwater improvement. The first project will support and enhance water quality monitoring and reporting by St. Andrew Bay Watch. The information from this effort will help guide water quality improvement projects.

More information on these efforts is available on the County's RESTORE Act web page at bay-countyfl.gov.



CONTACT US:

(850) 215-9965 | 5230 West Highway 98, Panama City, Florida 32401
www.bayeda.com



WHO WE ARE

Rebuild Bay County Inc. (RBCI) organized shortly after Hurricane Michael In October 2018, officially standing up as a nonprofit in March 2019. Its mission is to provide critical resources for the Bay County community during the Hurricane Michael extensive recovery process. RBCI expects to be there each step of the way to facilitate the rebuilding of hope, hearts, and homes. It has served as an umbrella organization for nonprofit groups from throughout the area and the country aiding residents in recovery. Along with its partner organizations, Rebuild Bay County, Inc. has led resident intake at the Community Recovery Center and provided residents access to needed resources. We provide one-on-one case management through the Disaster Case Management Program.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2019?

- Organized the 'Pray for Bay' six-month anniversary event
- Organized the 'Night to Unite' one-year anniversary event with state and local leaders, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in attendance and more than 1,200 residents served
- Received 501(c)3 determination
- Kicked-off the Rebuild Bay School Initiative which provides focused case management on the school-based population
- Began work on two sponsored homes under the school initiative
- Distributed more than 1,500 bundles of shingles to non-profit builders to complete new roofs for 23 homes
- Solicited and received more than \$100,000 in donated materials
- Matched 1,600 volunteers to partners organizations for more than 12,000 volunteer hours worked on ongoing projects for Bay County residents

CONTACT US:

(850) 320-3211 | director@rebuildbaycounty.org

www.rebuildbaycounty.org

Facebook.com/RebuildBayCountyInc

Text-2-Donate : REBUILDBAY (to 41444)

BAY COUNTY COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
ADMINISTRATION	248-8140
ADDRESSING	248-8374
ANIMAL CONTROL	767-3333
BUDGET OFFICE	248-8240
BUILDERS SERVICES	248-8350
CAFE	248-8196
CODE ENFORCEMENT	248-8290
COMMUNICATIONS	248-8170
CO-OP EXTENSION	784-6105
COUNTY ATTORNEY	248-8175
EMERGENCY SERVICES	784-4000
EMS	248-6040
ENGINEERING	248-8301
FACILITIES	248-8120
FIRE SERVICES	248-6040
GENERAL SERVICES	248-8732
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS	248-8071
HUMAN RESOURCES	248-8201
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	248-8004
LIBRARY	522-2100
MEDICAL EXAMINER	747-5740
MOSQUITO CONTROL	248-8720
PARKS & RECREATION	248-8730
PLANNING	248-8250
PUBLIC WORKS	248-8302
PURCHASING	248-8270
RECORDS MANAGEMENT	248-8278
RISK MANAGEMENT	248-8230
ROADS	248-8810
SECURITY	248-8195
SOLID WASTE	236-2212
TRANSIT	248-8161
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING	248-8740
UTILITY SERVICES	248-5010
VETERANS SERVICES	248-8280

CONSTITUTIONAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT	747-5100
CLERK FINANCE	747-5219
PROPERTY APPRAISER	248-8401
SHERIFF	747-4700
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS	784-6100
TAX COLLECTOR	248-8501

MUNICIPAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CALLAWAY	871-6000
LYNN HAVEN	265-2121
MEXICO BEACH	648-5700
PANAMA CITY BEACH	233-5100
PANAMA CITY	872-3010
PARKER	871-4104
SPRINGFIELD	872-7570

OTHER

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL	233-5070
FLORIDA STATE INFO CENTER	1-866- 693-6748
ONLINE	http://411.myflorida.com
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE	215-9965

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
FIRE / POLICE / AMBULANCE	9-1-1
BAY COUNTY DISPATCH	784-4000
ANIMAL CONTROL DISPATCH	248-6034
POISON INFORMATION	1-800-222-1222

WE WILL REBUILD



AS BAY COUNTY REBUILDS, **WE'RE WITH YOU.** IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM RECOVERY SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS.

WE STAND WITH YOU.

VISIT THE FOLLOWING FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[REHOUSEBAY.ORG](https://rehousebay.org) | [RECOVERBAYCOUNTY.ORG](https://recoverbaycounty.org) | [REBUILDBAYCOUNTY.ORG](https://rebuildbaycounty.org)



**BAYCOUNTY,
FLORIDA**
BAYCOUNTYFL.GOV

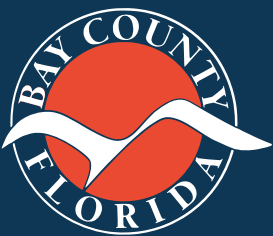


The background is a solid dark blue. It is decorated with numerous circles of varying sizes. The circles are outlined in four colors: teal, orange, green, and white. They are scattered across the page, with some overlapping. The text is positioned in the lower right quadrant.

***more than you
imagined.***

LAYOUT & DESIGN BY:
GORGEOUS (GRGS.CO | 850-888-8GRG)

This publication can be viewed online in PDF format
at the Bay County website: www.baycountyfl.gov



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